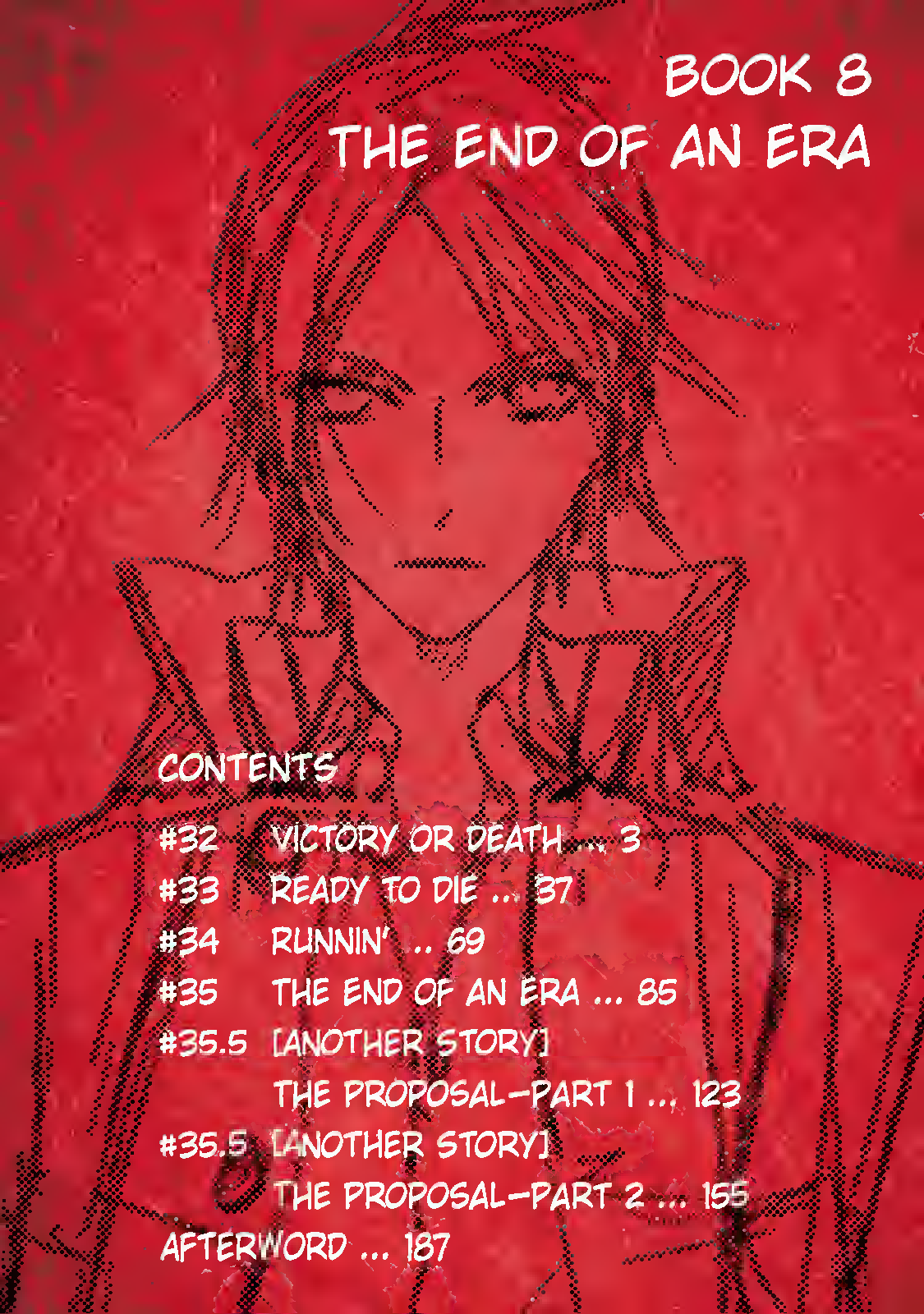
SAMURAI DRIVE
Fujiko Kosumi
8

SAMURAI DRIVE 8
FUJIKO KOSUMI



BOOK 8
THE END OF AN ERA

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#32:
VICTORY
OR
DEATH

Samurai Drive

CHARACTER PROFILE

A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT WHO TRANSFERRED TO SHISEIKAN HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS 1-1, HE CALLS HIMSELF "HARUMA'S COMRADE." HE IS ORIGINALLY FROM SHIGA PREFECTURE, AND HIS RESPECT FOR SEISHIRO DREW HIM TO TOKYO. HE LIVES IN THE SCHOOL DORMS AND WORKS PART-TIME TO PAY FOR HIS TUITION.

THIS CLASSMATE OF HARUMA IS GENTLE AND COOL-HEADED, BUT DEEP DOWN HE'S A PASSIONATE YOUNG MAN AND A HUGE JIN FAN. REN'S THE FRIEND HE JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET RID OF.

THIS CLASSMATE OF HARUMA IS VERY IMPULSIVE, PASSIONATE, AND EASILY MOVED TO TEARS. HE'S ALSO NOT VERY TOUGH. IN THE PAST, HARUMA HAS WIPED THE FLOOR WITH HIM...

HE IS ALSO ONE OF HARUMA'S CLASSMATES. PEOPLE CALL HIM THE "FOUR-EYED DETECTIVE." MAYBE THERE'S A MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION CALLED THE "HAJIME KANEDA DETECTIVE GROUP."

THE PROTAGONIST OF THE STORY. HARUMA IS A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT AT SHISEIKAN HIGH SCHOOL, AND HE IS IN CLASS 1-1. HE IS RUMORED TO BE THE MOST SKILLED SWORDSMAN IN HIS YEAR. THE MONSTROUS STRENGTH HE DISPLAYED DURING HIS SEARCH FOR HIS TEACHER'S KILLER SOON WON HIM THE NICKNAME "WHITE DAEMON." THAT SAID, HE'S CHRONICALLY SLEEPY AND IS A GUY OF FEW (ALMOST NO) WORDS, SO IT'S GENERALLY HARD TO TELL HE'S EVEN THERE AT ALL. THANKS TO IBUKI, HE'S STARTING TO SEEM A BIT MORE NORMAL.

HARUMA'S OLDER BROTHER. HE IS THE RIGHT-HAND MAN OF HIS FATHER, A RADICAL SWORD ABOLITIONIST, PROVIDING SUPPORT BEHIND THE SCENES. HE DOES NOT TAKE KINDLY TO HIS BROTHER HARUMA BECAUSE HE IS STILL DEVOTED TO SEISHIRO.

HE IS THE LEADER OF THE "TRUE SWORD-BEARER" (THE EXTREMISTS) PARTY THAT IS PUSHING FOR THE "SPECIAL SWORD ABOLISHMENT EDICT." THIS MYSTERIOUS MAN HAS STRONG INFLUENCE ON POLITICIANS AND THE POLICE. HE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CLOSE WITH YUKINARI AND SEISHIRO.

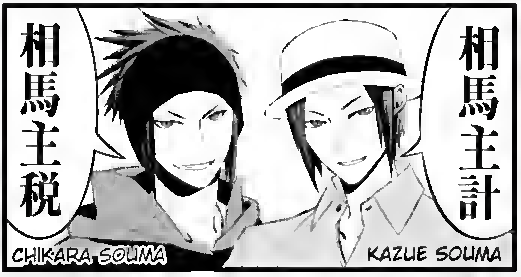
A GIFTED SWORDSMAN WHO WAS MURDERED TWO YEARS AGO AT THE AGE OF 23. HE WAS HARUMA'S MENTOR. JUST BEFORE HE DIED, HE KILLED INNOCENT CIVILIANS, AN ACT WHICH DESTROYED HIS REPUTATION AFTER HIS DEATH.

HE WAS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AT SHISEIKAN AND THE SCHOOL'S STRONGEST SWORDSMAN. HE AND HARUMA WERE BOTH SEISHIRO'S DISCIPLES. AFTER BEING SHOT BY YUKINARI, HE RETURNED TO SHISEIKAN TO INSPIRE HARUMA AND THE OTHER STUDENTS. HE DIED SHORTLY AFTER.

HARUMA'S CLASSMATE. HE HAS A SERVANT CALLED SHADOW, WHO IS A DESCENDENT OF NINJAS.

SEISHIRO'S COMRADE. FOR HIS CRIMES OF MURDERING INNOCENT CIVILIANS, HE WAS PUT TO DEATH.

A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AT SHISEIKAN. HE WAS JIN'S QUIET, COURTEOUS PARTNER. AMONG THE SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS, ONLY JIN IS MORE SKILLED WITH A SWORD. HE WAS RESOLVED TO DEVOTE HIS LIFE TO JIN.



TWO SOPHOMORE BROTHERS CALLED THE "TWIN DEVILS." THE LEFT IS THE OLDER BROTHER CHIKARA, AND THE RIGHT IS THE YOUNGER BROTHER, KAZUE.

STORY OUTLINE

AFTER THE MEIJI RESTORATION, THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT ALLOWED THE SAMURAI TO CONTINUE TO BEAR SWORDS. THIS PRACTICE HAS CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT, BUT THE POLITICAL CLIMATE NOW FAVORS FACTIONS AND MOVEMENTS THAT AIM TO BAN THE CARRYING OF SWORDS.

IN THIS UNSTABLE ERA, THE TRUE SWORD-BEARERS, LED BY REIJI, PUSHED THROUGH THE SPECIAL SWORD ABOLISHMENT EDICT, WHICH BANS CARRYING SWORDS BY ALL BUT A SELECT FEW! HAVING BEEN LABELED A DANGEROUS ELEMENT BY THE TRUE SWORD-BEARERS, THE FAMOUS SCHOOL FOR SWORDSMEN, SHISEIKAN, WAS FORCIBLY CLOSED DOWN. IT WAS IN THIS DELICATE SITUATION THAT JIN SAITO SACRIFICED HIS LIFE TO GIVE THE STUDENTS A MESSAGE THAT WOULD BRING THEM TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN.

THEN THE FATEFUL DAY FINALLY CAME. THE TRUE SWORD-BEARERS BROUGHT THEIR SWORDS DOWN ON SHISEIKAN. DUE TO THE BETRAYAL OF SENSYU, THE TRUE SWORD-BEARERS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ROOF OF THE MAIN BUILDING. AT THE TOP, REIJI CALLS FOR THE "BOSS," HARUMA, TO CHALLENGE HIM. EVERYONE DOES THEIR BEST TO GET THEIR GENERAL, HARUMA, TO REIJI, BUT THEY BEGIN TO FALL ONE-BY-ONE.

KLANG
KLINK
PING
DASSH
DON'T STOP.
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
FOCUS ONLY ON HELPING HARUMA MOVE FORWARD.
AAAAHHH
あああ
HEAD TO THE ROOF!

KEEP GOING!
JUST IGNORE THE GRUNTS!
STOMP
あとで10倍返ししてやりゃあいい!!
THEY'LL PAY FOR IT LATER!
I KNOW!
KLAK
KLIK
!

KRANG
KLANK
WOOSH
KLACK

WHOA!
This isn't good!
AND HIDEHITO'S PUTTING UP AN AMAZING FIGHT!!
TCH!
A REAL OPPONENT, HUH?
HEY, HIDEHITO, LET'S HURRY!
THWOCK
WRAP IT UP ALREADY!
THAT'S CRAZY TALK!
KRANG
KLANG
YOU MAY SAY THAT...
...BUT FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, I SUGGEST LETTING ME STOP YOU HERE.
THE OTHERS WON'T BE AS KIND.
AT LEAST I'M KIND ENOUGH TO END YOU QUICKLY AND MERCIFULLY.
....

YOU'RE VERY SKILLED.
AND YOUR FIGHTING STYLE IS FAMILIAR.
YOU MUST BE THAT SWORDSMAN THAT WAS FIGHTING ALONGSIDE JIN SAITO AT THE KOKONOE MANOR.

IT'S TRULY A WASTE.
YOU AND JIN SAITO HAVE SO MUCH SKILL, YET YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME ON THIS LOST CAUSE.
?
HE HAD ALL OF THAT TALENT AND THREW HIS LIFE AWAY IN A MEANINGLESS BATTLE.
I CAN'T THINK OF ANY OTHER WORD FOR IT THAN A WASTE.

SKRAFF
HEY, HIDEHITO!
TRULY...
I KNOW.
UGH
BUT...
...JIN SAITO'S DEATH WAS FOR ABSO-LUTELY NOTHING.
I CAN'T LET THAT SLIDE.

PLEASE GO AHEAD.
I...
...MUST SETTLE THINGS WITH HIM.
DAMMIT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!

STOMP
OH, NO YOU DON'T.
FOR NOW, JUST KEEP MOVING.
HIDEHITO...
...WILL CATCH UP FAST, RIGHT?
KLICK
KLACK
KLICK
FWSSH
C'MON!
WE'RE IN A HURRY!
急いでるのに
YOU AGAIN!
One after another!!
REIJI IS ONLY INTERESTED IN HARUMA KOKONOE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, LITTLE BOYS.
!
YOU'RE...
ALL OTHERS ...
...MUST DIE!
TMMP
THUMP

KERANG
HARUMA!

SWSSH
ZWIPP
SWIP
ONE...
KLACK
...AFTER ANO-THER!
DON'T...
KRACK
HE'S REALLY GOOD!
...GET IN MY WAY!

EVERY SINGLE TIME...
ONE OF YOU GETS IN THE WAY...
...ONE OF OUR FRIENDS ...
WE HAVE TO LEAVE OUR FRIENDS BEHIND.
I KNOW THIS, BUT...
...THIS DILEMMA FEELS AWFUL.
BUT...
IT'S LIKE IT'S PHYSICALLY PAINFUL.

THUMP
HARUMA, STOP!
IBU…
…KI…
…
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU! YOU WERE ABOUT TO KILL SOMEONE!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?!
EVERY-THING!
I TOLD YOU I'D DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO STOP YOU!
MOST IMPORTANTLY, IF YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS, HURRY TO THE ROOF!
DON'T WASTE YOUR STRENGTH HERE!
THEY STARTED THIS FIGHT WITH US! YOU HAVE A DIFFERENT OPPONENT!
GET IT STRAIGHT! NOW GO!

SEE?
NOW GO. WE'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU LATER.
THAT'S RIGHT.
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE US.
WE DON'T NEED YOU TO PROTECT US. WE CAN FIGHT ON OUR OWN!
I'LL...
...BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

GO!
WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SPIRIT YOU JUST SHOWED?
YOU WERE JUST HIDING YOUR WEAKNESS LIKE A FOOL.
WHY DO YOU FIGHT? YOU'LL DIE ANYWAY
BUT STILL...
GIGGLE
I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD ANY OF THOSE.
YOU'RE JUST A MURDERER.
IS IT FOR YOUR FRIENDS? FOR YOUR CHEAP PRIDE OR SENSE OF JUSTICE?
WHAT A JOKE.
SKWINK

BASH
SLAM
SLASH
YOU GUYS...
SNAP
FWSSH
...ARE THE ONE WHO SET UP THAT TRAP!
IBUKI!
FINISH HER!

FINISH...
KLENCH
BSSH

REN!
COFF
FWUMP
HUFF
HUFF

REN!
REN!
HWOO
HEY!
SPEAK TO ME!
REN!

IF I COULD'VE ....
IF I WOULD'VE CUT HER WITHOUT HESITATION....
GO!
GAASP
GO TO HARUMA!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.
?!
WHY ME?

!
DON'T TALK LIKE THAT! I CAN'T LEAVE YOU BEHIND!
SHUT UP!
LET'S BE CLEAR.
WHAT IS OUR PRIMARY GOAL?
IT'S TO DEFEAT THE EXTREM-ISTS, RIGHT?
SO DON'T JUST STAND AROUND HERE ...
...FEE-LING SORRY FOR YOUR-SELF.
GO HELP HARUMA! DO IT FOR US!
IS WHAT I BELIEVE IN WRONG?

...IT TAUGHT ME HOW TO PROTECT THOSE I HOLD DEAR.
THERE IS NO BELIEF WORTH MURDERING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING OVER.
BECAUSE HE TAUGHT ME THAT AND LIVED BY THOSE TEACHINGS...
BUT...
SORRY!
I'M SORRY ...
...THIS IS...
...REALITY.

KRANG
HEY, REN...!
COME AT ME, YOU BASTARDS!
IBUKI...
YOU SAVED ME COUNTLESS TIMES.
EACH TIME...
...YOU LEFT A PLACE FOR ME...
...AND WAITED FOR ME.
THAT'S WHY...
...LET ME...
...PROTECT MY PLACE UNTIL THE END.
KRRCH
SO THIS IS IT!

SLASSH
DROP
PLOP
HEY, MAKIO...
...WHEN FACING AN ENEMY...
...A SWORDSMAN SHOULD NEVER CLOSE HIS EYES.

UKYO!
EVERYONE...
...IS FIGHTING.
THE FLAMES SMOLDERING IN OUR HEARTS STILL HAVEN'T BEEN EXTINGUISHED.

CLEAR A PATH!
OPEN UP A PATH FOR HARUMA KOKONOE!
KLACK
BRAPP
I'LL CRUSH YOU ALL!
RAGH! I AIN'T TAKING ONE STEP BACK!

HUFF
!
TASUKU!
PUFF
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE TAKEN CARE OF MOST OF 'EM.
HUH?
TCH!
THEY JUST KEEP COMING AND COMING...
FWSSH
GUYS!
LET'S DO THIS!

LOOKS LIKE...
...WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT.
TASUKU...
....
HEH. IS THAT RIGHT?
KLACK
HAH
THIS SHOULD BE FUN.
I'M, TASUKU SERIZAWA, THE BEST SWORDSMAN AT SHISEIKAN!.
I'LL BE YOUR OPPONENT!
WHO'S THE BEST, NOW?
PFFFT!
SHUT UP!
I'LL...
...FIGHT YOU TO THE END!

KLANG
WHY MUST YOU FIGHT?
DON'T THE STUDENTS OF SHISEIKAN ...
... CARE FOR THEIR LIVES OR THE SWORD?
KRANG
IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE AND BE A SWORDSMAN ...
SEISHIRO SHINDO, JIN SAITO, AND NOBUCHIKA ODANI HAVE ALL DIED BECAUSE OF THIS.
...YOU COULD HAVE BECOME PART OF REIJI'S FUTURE.
WHY MUST YOU STUBBORNLY HEAD DOWN THE PATH OF YOUR OWN DESTRUCTION?
IF YOU CEASE TO EXIST, THERE'S NO MEANING LEFT.
WHAT MATTERS MOST IN THIS WORLD IS SURVIVAL!

YOSHICHIKA!
KLICK
KLACK
JUST SURVIVING WITHOUT BELIEVING IN ANYTHING IS WHAT I DON'T GET, YOU PIECE OF CRAP!
TMP
TMP
AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ANYWAY?
WHY ARE YOU JUST LISTENING TO HIM BABBLE?
WHERE IS THE MEANING IN SURVIVING AND LIVING WITHOUT PRIDE!
HE'S TALKING ABOUT MY BROTHER AND YOUR BOSS.
I WANTED TO HEAR...
...WHAT THE PEOPLE WHO DENY JIN'S WAY OF LIFE HAD TO SAY.
BUT...

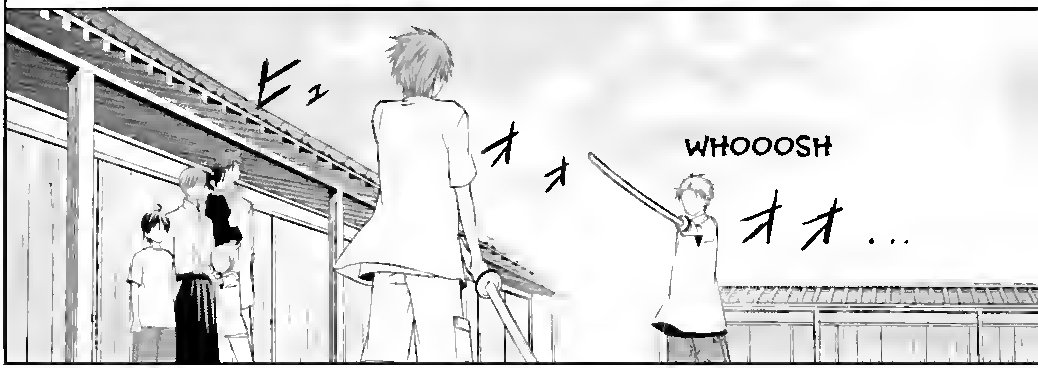
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG.

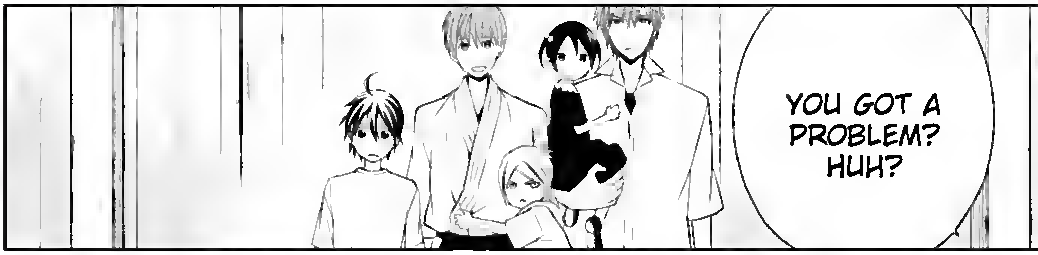
EVEN SO, WE'LL...
...AND DRIVE FORTH TO THE END.
...BELIEVE IN OURSELVES...
END

I NEVER
REALLY
LIKED THAT
GUY.

#33: READY TO DIE

NOT BACK THEN, AND NOT NOW.





BUT I WON'T LET YOU INSULT JIN BECAUSE OF THAT.
I WON'T DENY THAT.
HIDEHITO SHIKIMORI – EIGHT YEARS OLD
NOBODY'S BETTER THAN MY BROTHER. DON'T YOU GET IT?
YOSHICHIKA ODANI – EIGHT YEARS OLD

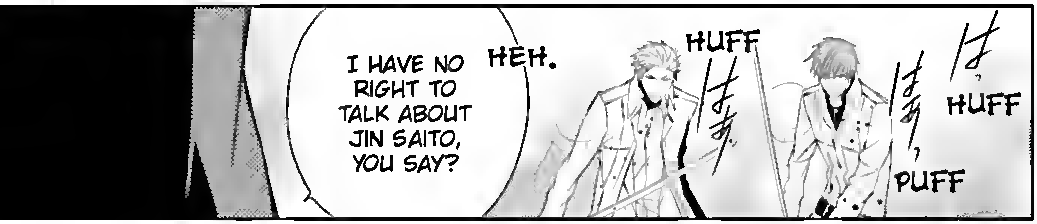
SHUT UP!
BIG TALK FOR SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER BEAT HIM
THE ODANI FAMILY IS THE BEST! JIN'S A BIG NOTHING!
GRUMBLE
SHUT UP, IDIOT! MORON!
WHOOSH
NEVER.
NOT ON MY LIFE.
TAKE...
...IT BACK.
SHOOW
DASSH
KLACK
I'LL NEVER TAKE IT BACK.

HEY.
FOR A FIGHT BETWEEN KIDS...
...IT'S A LITTLE TOO INTENSE.
....
IT'S A RECKLESS FIGHT.
THEIR LIVES WOULD BE IN DANGER IF THOSE WERE REAL SWORDS.
OH...
HEY!
JIN!
DASSH
WHAT...
IS...
WRONG...

GRR
...WITH YOU TWO!
CUT IT OUT!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO RISK YOUR LIFE!
SMAK
LIVES ARE...
...TO BE RISKED AT THE MOST CRUCIAL MOMENTS!
OTHER PEOPLE PROBABLY WON'T UNDERSTAND...
BUT THEN AND NOW...
JIN?
イ...?

...THAT WAS ONE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO US.

HMPH!
WHOOP
KLACK
TAP


I HAVE NO RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT JIN SAITO, YOU SAY?
HEH.
HUFF
HUFF
PUFF

YOU STRUGGLE MIGHTILY FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T CARE ABOUT THEIR OWN LIVES.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST DIE?

KLANG
I'M SAYING YOU'RE GARBAGE! AND I'M NOTHING LIKE THAT!
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF DYING AT ALL.
...SAID I DON'T?!
WHO ...
IT'S TO COME BACK ALIVE!
WHY DO YOU THINK I'M FIGHTING?
I WON'T DIE THAT EASILY.

...I HAVE SOMETHING I WANT TO PROTECT!
I FIGHT BECAUSE ...
I MIGHT NEVER RETURN.
SHE MIGHT BE LEFT ALL BY HERSELF. EVEN KNOWING THAT...
...SHE SAW ME OFF WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.
GRUMBLE
I CAN'T LEAVE HER BEHIND

THUD
THAT'S WHY I WILL CLING ONTO LIFE!
SKWEEH

SLISSH
YOSHICHIKA
!
COFF
PUFF!
SSZU
KLANG
HUFF!
SWSSH
SWSSH
....
SSZU
SWSSH
SLURT

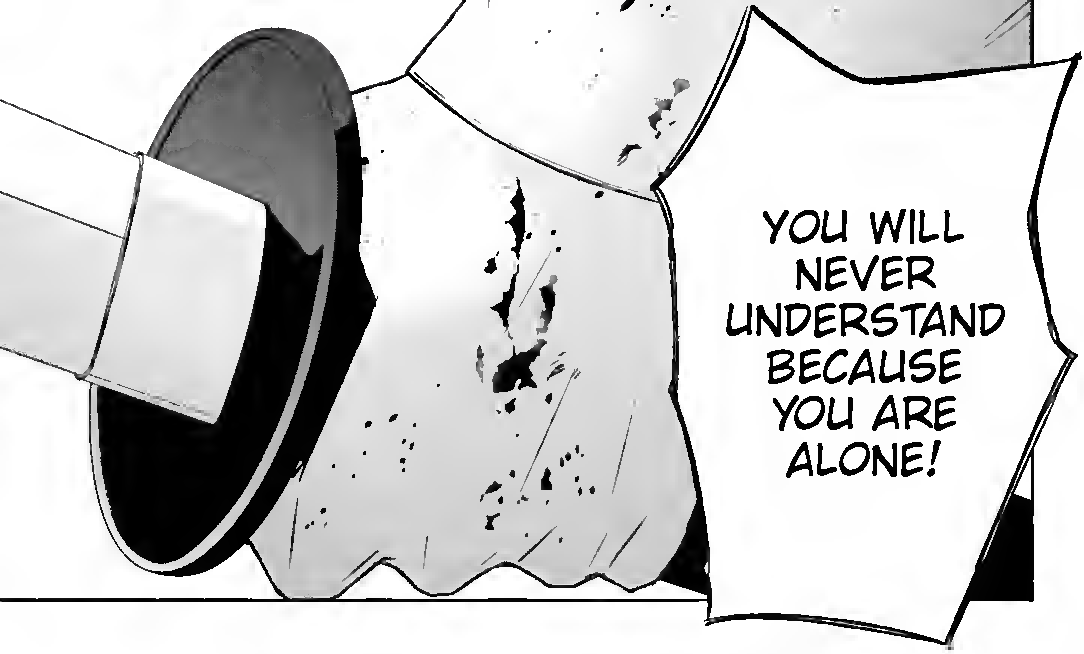
THUD
WOBBLE
BUT THEY STILL COULDN'T KEEP THE WORLD FROM CHANGING.
...ALL FOUGHT FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVED IN, AND THEY PAID WITH THEIR LIVES.
THE TRUTH IS SEISHIRO SHINDO, NOBUCHIKA ODANI, AND JIN SAITO...
RISKING YOUR LIFE DOESN'T MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE.
JUST GIVE UP. YOU CAN BARELY STAND.
DAMMIT!
YOSHICHIKA
PLUUMP
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
HUFF
HUFF
HE FOUGHT TO PROTECT SEISHIRO...
MY BROTHER FOUGHT THE ENTIRE TIME HE WAS IN JAIL.
THIS IS NO JOKE!
!
NOD

THEY WON'T DO WHAT I TELL THEM TO.
COFF
HUFF!
DAMMIT...
MY LEGS...
DAMMIT...
HIDEHITO...
GRINN
DON'T JUST STAND THERE. HURRY UP AND GET GOING.
HUFF
BROTHER...
PUFF
ITSUKI...

GASP
BROTHER?..

DROP

HOW PITIFUL...
EVEN AFTER YOU ARE FACED WITH REALITY, YOU STILL CHOOSE THE PATH OF DEATH?
YOU WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND.
THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE WORTH RISKING YOUR LIFE FOR.



OUR EFFORTS WON'T BE FOR NOTHING.

IT'S ALL CONNECTED.

KRRANG
I WON'T LET ANYONE...
...CALL WHAT WE'VE COME TOGETHER TO ACCOMP-LISH...
WOBBLE
HAAAH!

THRSSH
A "WASTE"!
WHAT?!
COFF
WHY DIDN'T YOU DODGE?!
IF I WOULD'VE DODGED...
SLSSH
...I COULDN'T HAVE KILLED YOU!

DROP
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU ASK.
COFF
YOU WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND.
DROP
HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF TO KILL ME?
DROP
W-WHY?
WHY DID YOU GO THAT FAR?

JIN...
HUFF
HUFF

BACK THEN...
IN THE DEEP HAZE, YOU SOFTLY...
...SAID THIS TO ME.
PSSST
I'LL SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE.
IT WAS HORRIBLY CALM...

THERE IS A DUTY I MUST FULFILL.
I WON'T LET ANYTHING GET CLOSE TO THE THINGS HE VALUED AND PROTECTED.
FOR THAT...

HE'S WAITING FOR ME ON THE OTHER SIDE.

KLICK
KLACK
KLICK
TMP
FWHIP
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
OH...
UHH...
HELLO THERE.

YAANK
GO ON AHEAD NOW.
REIJI IS WAITING FOR YOU.
YOU HEARD HIM.
GET GOING.
HARUMA KOKONOE.
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND FIGHT.

YOU'RE STRONG.
GO ON.
KLENCH

NOW THEN...
SHOULD I SAY, LONG TIME NO SEE?
HOW ARE THE WOUNDS ON YOUR ARMS?
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN.
WHY, THANK YOU.
FWAAH
HEY...
WHY DON'T WE PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF?
THAT'S WHAT WE WERE HOPING FOR.
YOU BASTARDS ARE GOING DOWN...

...EVEN IF WE HAVE TO TAKE YOU WITH US!

KLACK
KLACK
SLAM
KLICK
KLICK
KLICK
KLACK

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU...
...SEISHIRO'S HEIR
WELL THEN...
SHALL WE GET STARTED?
END

#34: RUNNIN'

A VIDEO INTERVIEW?

WHY?

I'M GOING TO PLAY IT DURING THE SHISEI FESTIVAL.

I'LL START FILMING NOW.

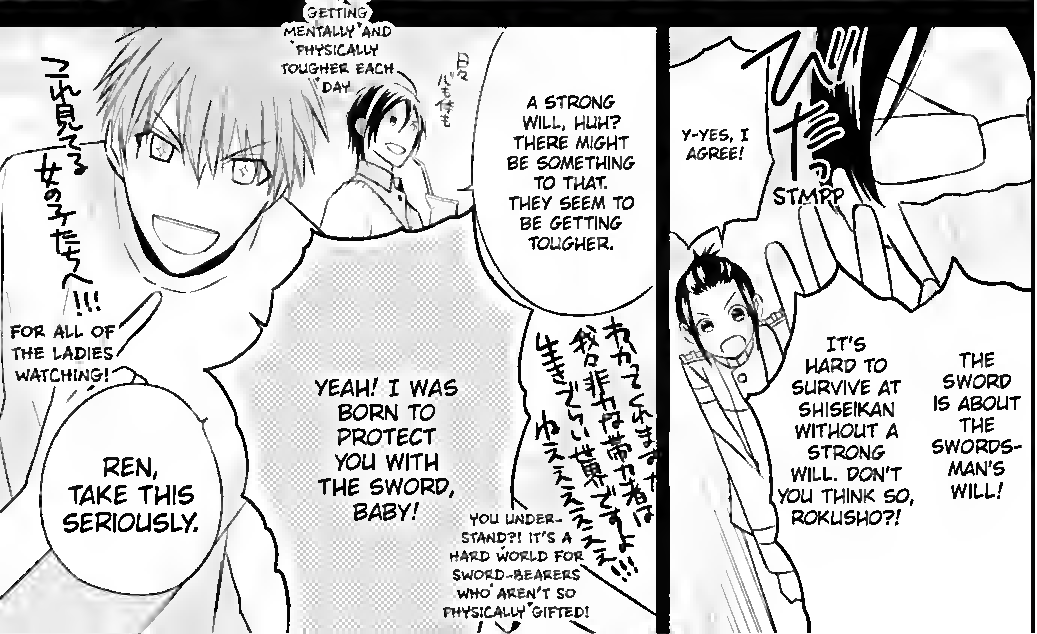
THE THEME IS...

...WHAT DOES THE SWORD MEAN TO YOU?

HUH?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING ASKING ME A STUPID QUESTION LIKE THAT?
TASUKU.
THIS IS FOR PR PURPOSES, SO BE MORE FRIENDLY ABOUT IT.
I'M SICK OF YOUR MODEL STUDENT ACT ANYWAY!
SHUT UP, MINAMOTO!
THE SWORD IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MAN! A MAN!
YEAH, OKAY. WHATEVER.
....
WHAT IS THE SWORD?
THAT'S A DIFFICULT QUESTION.
TO ME, IT MEANS "DESTINY."
BEING BORN A SWORDSMAN IN THIS DAY AND AGE IS PROOF OF THAT, I THINK.
BESIDES, I'M A BLADE SMITH BY TRADE.
森重刀匠
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SHIMA?
IT'S A REPRESENTATION OF MYSELF
LIFE.
Although it sounds stereotypical.

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO CHERISH EVERY MOMENT AND EXPERIENCE I HAVE AT SHISEIKAN.
WHAT?
SORRY... I'M ACTUALLY KINDA MOVED.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONLY INTERESTED IN THE PINK CARNATION.*
WELL SAID, SUZU!
COME ON.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO MY REPUTATION?
Hey!

*THE CROSS-DRESSING CONTEST CALLED THE "PINK CARNATION GRAND PRIX" HELD AT SHISEI FESTIVAL.


THEY'RE GETTING MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY TOUGHER EACH DAY.
A STRONG WILL, HUH? THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THAT. THEY SEEM TO BE GETTING TOUGHER.
Y-YES, I AGREE!
STMRP
FOR ALL OF THE LADIES WATCHING!
YEAH! I WAS BORN TO PROTECT YOU WITH THE SWORD, BABY!
REN, TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY.
YOU UNDER-STAND?! IT'S A HARD WORLD FOR SWORD-BEARERS WHO AREN'T SO PHYSICALLY GIFTED!
IT'S HARD TO SURVIVE AT SHISEIKAN WITHOUT A STRONG WILL. DON'T YOU THINK SO, ROKUSHO?!
THE SWORD IS ABOUT THE SWORDS-MAN'S WILL!

HOW ABOUT YOU, HARUMA?
THE SWORD...
...IS A SIGN OF ONE'S DEVOTION TO SINCERITY.
I MUST UPHOLD A CODE OF HONESTY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS
HA HA.
RIGHT?
LIGHT...
...AND DARKNESS.

HAH!
THE ANSWERS ARE ENDLESS.
SO MANY.
OOF!
AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME, IT'S ALL GOOD.
EVERYONE HERE CARRIES THE SWORD SO THEY CAN LIVE THE LIFE THEY WANT.
ALSO, I REALLY DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF IDIOTS...
....WHO CARRY AROUND SOMETHING SOCIETY DESPISES IN THIS DAY AND AGE.
SO...
...WHAT ABOUT YOU?

PUFF
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I...
HUFF
LET'S GO.
MY SWORD...
WHAT I BELIEVE IN...
I...
DAMN...

!
DASH
I DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO PRAY FOR HIM.
I CAN'T STOP.
....
WHY...
...AM I RUNNING?
DAMMIT!

!
HUFF
CHIKARA!
IS THAT YOU, IBUKI?
I CAN'T SEE...
!
UGH...
COFF
THE SOUMA BROTHERS!

HMM? OH...
WE MADE THEM PAY...
...AS BROTHERS.
HUFF
WHAT'S WRONG?
ARE YOU CRYING?

WHY IS EVERYONE LAYING DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE IN?
WHY...
...IS EVERY-ONE...
I COULDN'T KEEP MY FEELINGS PENT UP ANYMORE.
I FEEL THE SAME AS EVERYONE HERE...
...I DON'T WANT EVERYONE TO DIE!
EVEN IF THEY SAY IT'S PATHETIC...
IF I KILL, IT'S OVER FOR ME. BUT BECAUSE OF THAT, I LET MY FRIEND DIE.
BUT I CAN'T BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE...

DO I EVEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HERE?
WHAT AM I?
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!
DON'T DIE!
YOU IDIOT...

LISTEN. WE AREN'T GONNA DIE.
BAP
ボン
WE WON'T DIE.
LISTEN TO ME. KAZUE, ME, AND THE OTHERS...
...AREN'T CARRYING THE SWORD FOR THE SAKE OF ANYONE THAN OURSELVES.
WE'VE ALL COME HERE DOING WHAT WE WANT.

YOU SHOULD USE THE SWORD HOW YOU WANT TO USE IT TOO.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO.
THINK ABOUT WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU NOW.

NOW HURRY UP AND GO.
GO HELP HIM.
SO THE "TWIN DEVILS" ARE GIVING LECTURES NOW, HUH?
ISN'T THIS YOUR JOB, KAZUE?

I'M STILL HESITANT...
...AND CONFUSED...
BUT, I'M STILL DRIVEN FORWARD...

...TO WHERE YOU PROMISED TO WAIT!
SLAM
END

#35: THE END
OF AN ERA

SHALL WE GET STARTED?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS IS WHAT I SOUGHT ALL ALONG...
THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME...
ARE YOU THE ONE...
..THAT MURDERED... ..SEISHIRO?
WHY?!
...THE TRUTH.

FOR LACK OF A BETTER WAY TO SAY IT...
...SEISHIRO WAS BLESSED.
HE WAS WARM, LOYAL, HAD AN UNWAVERING SENSE OF JUSTICE, AND A SWORD THAT SHOWED NO HESITATION.
HE WAS ALWAYS THAT WAY.
HE WAS A SHINING BEACON OF GOOD.
TO ME...
...HE WAS THE MOST UNINTERESTING PERSON IN WHOLE WORLD.
UNTIL THAT DAY...

WHEN HE ATTEMPTED TO KILL ME...
...I SAW THE TRUE NATURE OF A PERSON...
...WHO WAS SEEN AS THE SYMBOL OF EVERYTHING GOOD.
...IT CHANGED MY VIEW OF SEISHIRO DRAMATI-CALLY.
WHEN HE TOOK ME DOWN WITH HIS OWN HANDS...
THAT MADE HIM INTERESTING TO ME.
I REALIZED THAT NOTHING IN THIS WORLD IS COMPLETELY PURE.

...BRING IT DOWN, AND MAKE IT YIELD TO ME.
I WANTED TO TAKE EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM - HIS EYES, HIS SKILL WITH THE SWORD...
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?
SEISHIRO WAS...
THAT'S YOUR... ... REASON?
HE WAS SUCH A WARM PERSON...
IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN IT'S AN HONOR.
IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU...
...THAT HE CHANGED!
THAT'S WHY HE...
...KINDER THAN EVERYONE...
HIS TRUE NATURE...
...WAS CHANGED...
...BY YOU PEOPLE!

SO TWO YEARS AGO, ON THAT DAY...
I SURVIVED SO I COULD SEE THE DARKNESS WITHIN THAT LIGHT AGAIN.

STUKK
"IF I STEP OVER HIM, AN UNSPEAKABLE STATE OF MIND IS WAITING FOR ME," HE SAID.
BUT BECAUSE OF THIS FOOL, I LOST THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE HIM IN THAT STATE ONCE AGAIN.
YOU'RE THE WORST.
I WAS A LEAST HOPING TO SEE THAT DARKNESS...
...IN YOU – THE HEIRS OF SEISHIRO'S LEGACY.

KLINK
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT.
THAT'S WHY...
...YOU KILLED JIN!
AND ONCE AGAIN, YUKINARI INTERFERED.
SHUT UP!

THEN WHY...
...ARE YOU ATTACKING SHISEIKAN AND EVEN THE SWORD ITSELF?!
SEISHIRO AND JIN ARE GONE!
THEN JUST KILL ME AND LEAVE THE OTHERS ALONE!
EVEN THE THINGS...
SO, WHY?!
WHAT IS THE POINT...
...SEISHIRO WANTED TO PROTECT.
WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO DESTROY THE SWORD?!
TAKING AWAY SHISEIKAN! TAKING AWAY MY FRIENDS!
...OF THE SPECIAL SWORD ABOLISHMENT EDICT?!

SWAAH
BUT...
...SEISHIRO'S INFLUENCE STILL COURSES THROUGH THE WORLD OF THE SWORD.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU YEARN FOR HIM, HE IS GONE FOREVER.
THERE'S NO PARTICULAR MEANING AT ALL.
HIS REMNANTS ARE ANNOYING PESTS THAT DO NOTHING BUT REMIND ME OF HIM.
THEY BOTHER ME, SO I WILL EXTERMINATE THEM.
ONLY THE CHOSEN ONES LIKE ME NEED TO CARRY SWORDS.
SO MANY...
...HAVE DIED...

KLANG
...FOR THAT STUPID REASON?!

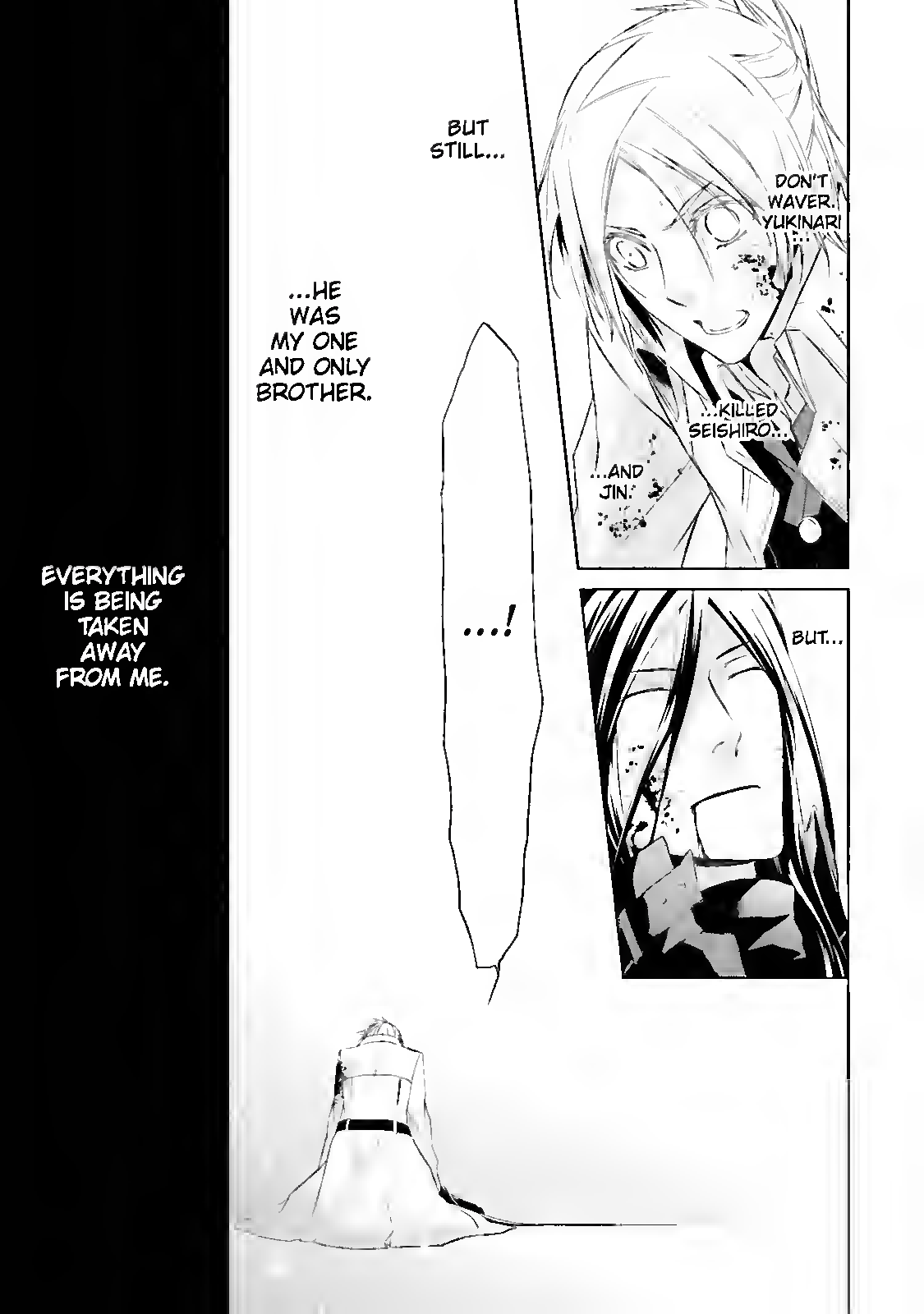
SEISHIRO PUT UP A BETTER FIGHT.
WHAT'S WRONG?
...I COULD'VE LEARNED SO MUCH MORE FROM THEM!
IF YOU...
...DIDN'T KILL THEM...

...AND JIN...
SEISHIRO...
THERE WAS SO MUCH MORE...
...I WANTED TO SAY TO THEM.
THUD

HUFF
KLICK
YOU'RE LETTING YOUR EMOTION OVERTAKE YOU. HOW DULL.
HUFF
BEGONE.

THUD
YOU...
COFF
YOU'VE INTERFERED UNTIL THE VERY END...
WHY?
TELL ME.
WHY DID YOU PROTECT ME?
YUKINARI, YOU...
I DO HATE YOU.

I...
...DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU NOW.
THEN WHY?!
MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD
BUT THAT ALL FADED AWAY AND...
...BETWEEN HATE...AND BETWEEN LOVE...
...I WAVERED...
EVERY TIME I SAW YOU...
...MY LOVE FOR YOU REMAINED.
...MORE THAN ANYTHING...


EVERYTHING IS BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM ME.
...HE WAS MY ONE AND ONLY BROTHER.
BUT STILL...
DON'T WAVER. YUKINARI...
...KILLED SEISHIRO...
...AND JIN.
...!
BUT...

EVERYTHING...
...TAKEN AWAY!..!
YOU...
YOU!
AND I WILL BE ALL ALONE AGAIN.

I'M LOSING SIGHT...
...OF THE LIGHT.
...MA!
HARUMA!

LET'S GO...
...AND END THIS!
HOW MANY TIMES...
...HAVE I BEEN SAVED BY THIS LIGHT?

KLACK
HIS SWORD FEELS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
...!
THEY...
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AROUND WITHOUT ME?!
WHEN I WAS ALONE IN THE DARKNESS, HE STOOD ALONGSIDE ME.
I FOUND THE TRUTH BECAUSE OF HIM.
THE REASON I AM WHO I AM NOW...
IT'S BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE FOR ME.
...IS YOU, IBUKI.
UGH!

BECAUSE YOU WERE MY LIGHT, IBUKI.
SLASSH
BASTARD!

I WON'T LET YOU TAKE HARUMA AWAY!
IBUKI?
I STILL DON'T THINK WHAT I BELIEVED IN WAS WRONG!
DESPITE WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. REN, THE OLDER STUDENTS...
...EVERYONE!
BUT...!
IF YOU TRY TO KILL SOMEONE I'LL BE THERE TO STOP YOU.
THE LIGHT...
YOUR ...
... SWORD.
I WON'T LET HIM!
THAT'S MY SINCERITY AND RIGHTEOUS-NESS.

RIGHT NOW, IBUKI...
...IS HEADING TOWARD THE DARK SIDE...
SLSSH
IF MY ONLY OTHER OPTION IS LOSING YOU!..
...THEN I'LL THROW AWAY EVERYTHING I BELIEVE IN!
IBUKI, NO!

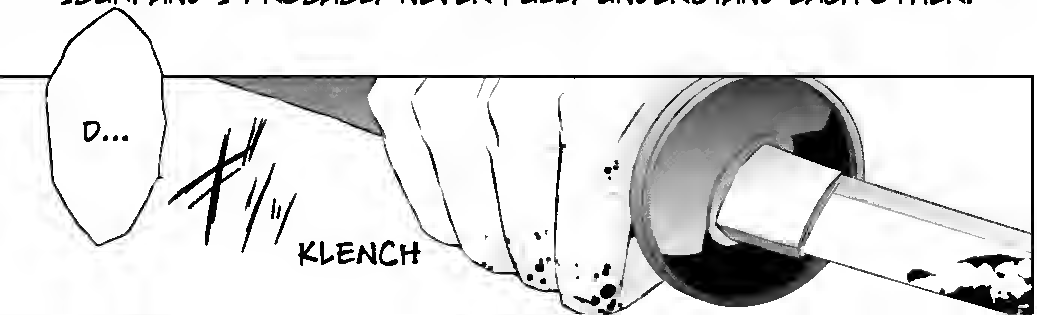
IT'S OVER.
THRSSH

KRNNCH
!!
WHERE...
...DOES HE GET THIS STRENGTH?
LET... GO.
I WANT HIM TO BE THE SAME PERSON THAT SAVED ME.
I WON'T LET THE LIKES OF YOU...
...TO CAUSE IBUKI TO THROW AWAY HIS BELIEFS.
GRIP
NEVER AGAIN...
THAT'S WHY I'LL KILL YOU.

IBUKI!
MY SWORD.
DON'T BE STUPID!
I'LL DO THIS!
IBUKI...
PLEASE...
...WILL I LET YOU TAKE ANYTHING FROM ME!

"IF YOU TRY TO KILL SOMEONE I'LL BE THERE TO STOP YOU."

"IBUKI AND I PROBABLY NEVER FULLY UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER."



DON'T TALK LIKE IT'S THE END.
YOU IDIOT!
THAT WAS A LIE.
WE UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER BETTER THAN ANYONE.
OUR EMOTIONS AND WHAT WE HAD TO DO.

SLASSH
DROP

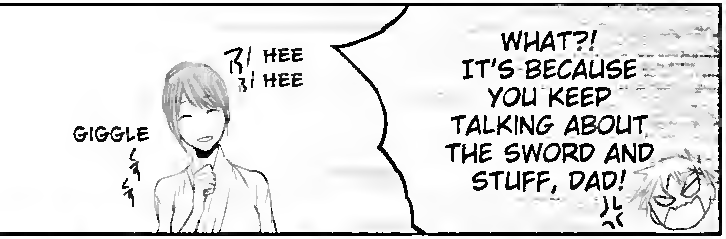
HARUMA.
IBU...
...KI...
THANK YOU...

"I WILL NEVER LET ANYONE TAKE ANYTHING FROM ME AGAIN."

THAT WAS HARUMA KOKONOE'S WISH...

DESPITE THE EFFORTS AND PASSION OF MANY...
...THE SWORD WAS GONE.
WITH REIJI'S DEATH, THE BATTLE CAME TO AN END.
BOTH THE STUDENTS OF SHISEIKAN AND EXTREMISTS WERE WIPED OUT, AND VERY FEW SURVIVED THE BATTLE.
SHISEIKAN WAS ABANDONED BECAUSE OF THIS INCIDENT.
BUT...
...TRUTH OF WHAT HAPPENED AT SHISEIKAN AND REIJI'S TRUE INTENTIONS WERE REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC.
FINALLY, THE RIGHT TO BEAR SWORDS WAS REVISITED, AND IT WAS REVOKED COMPLETELY.

BUT...



OVER TEN YEARS LATER...

SO YOU'VE FINALLY TAKEN AN INTEREST.
SAY, MS. YUKARI ...
DAD WAS SAYING THAT THIS DOJO...
...HAD LOTS OF AMAZING SWORDSMEN DURING HIS TIME.
IS THAT TRUE?

...INTO THE FUTURE.
KASUGA!
HARUKI IS FINALLY HERE!
LET'S GO TELL THE OTHERS.
WHAT? DAD, YOU'RE GOING TO WATCH?
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
GO HOME!
...AND DRIVE US TO MOVE FORWARD...
GET OUT THERE.
HARUKI.
OUR HOPES AND WISHES...
YES, IT'S TRUE.
COME WITH ME.
WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT FIRST.
...WILL BRING US TOGETHER...
END

#35.5 [ANOTHER STORY]: THE PROPOSAL — PART 1

IT ALL STARTED...
...WITH MESSAGE TEXT THAT HARUMA DIDN'T FINISH...
...AND A FIGHT.
YOU KEEP...
SLAP
...LYING LIKE THAT!
YOU JERK!
I, IBUKI TAKAHARA...
...WAS JUST SLAPPED BY MY FRIEND, ERINA...
...DURING THE SUMMER WHEN I WAS 25 YEARS OLD.

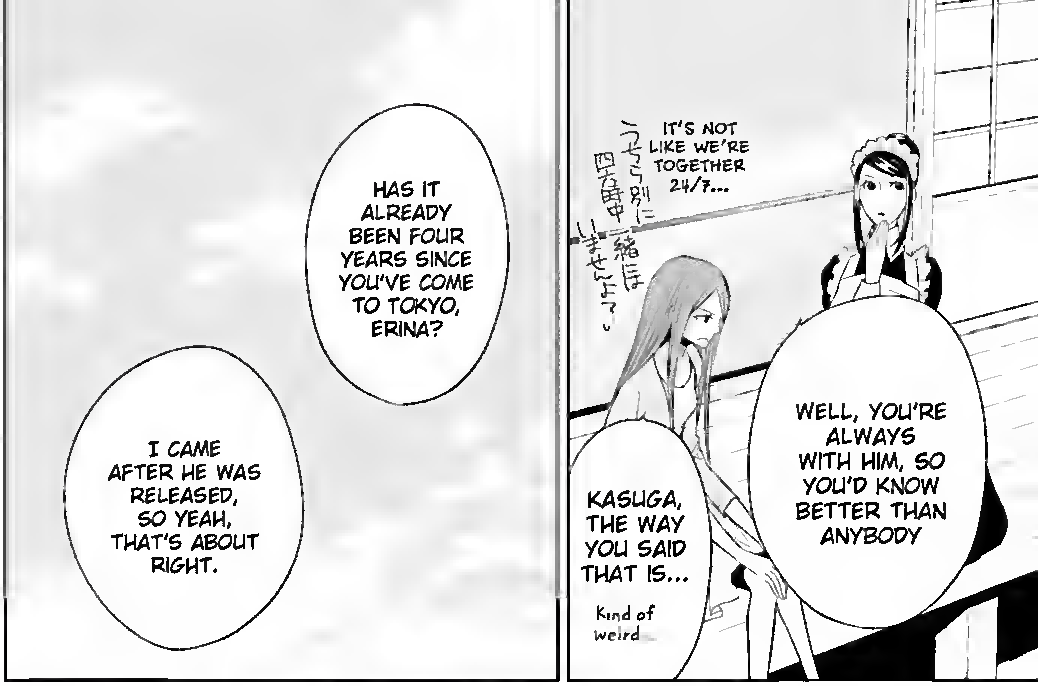
#35.5 [ANOTHER STORY]: THE PROPOSAL ~ PART 1

MR. IBUKI!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR CHEEK?
PHEW
MR. TAKAHARA
I HAD A FIGHT.
A FIGHT?
LISTEN. IF ANYONE PICKS A FIGHT WITH YOU, DON'T BACK DOWN!
OKAY!
MR. TAKAHARA, DON'T TEACH THE CHILDREN STRANGE THINGS!
IS THAT A MARK OF AFFECTION FROM YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
HA HA HA.
PRINCI-PAL...
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
SHE JUST DOESN'T GET IT.
I SEE.
HEE HEE.
DO YOU?

キャはは
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
MR. TAKAHARA
...DOESN'T GET IT.
SHE REALLY...
MR. IBUKI!
PLAY WITH ME UNTIL I GO HOME!
SURE THING.
RIGHT NOW, I CAN SMILE...
HUH?
ON TOP OF THAT, HE'S SINGLE, RIGHT?
MOMMY?
...IS ALWAYS SO CHEERY. HE'S WONDERFUL...
MR. TAKAHARA ...
ピ BEEP ピ
WOW, YOU'RE STILL USING A FLIP PHONE?
OH?
THAT'S...
GOOD-NIGHT!

KLICK
GRINN
IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME.
YEAH.
...ENOUGH FOR ME.

THAT SMILE IS A HUGE LIE.
NOD
NOD
THE GUY WHOSE TRADEMARK IS BEING POSITIVE AND CHEERY?
A LIE? IBUKI?


HAS IT ALREADY BEEN FOUR YEARS SINCE YOU'VE COME TO TOKYO, ERINA?
I CAME AFTER HE WAS RELEASED, SO YEAH, THAT'S ABOUT RIGHT.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE TOGETHER 24/7...
WELL, YOU'RE ALWAYS WITH HIM, SO YOU'D KNOW BETTER THAN ANYBODY
KASUGA, THE WAY YOU SAID THAT IS...
Kind of weird

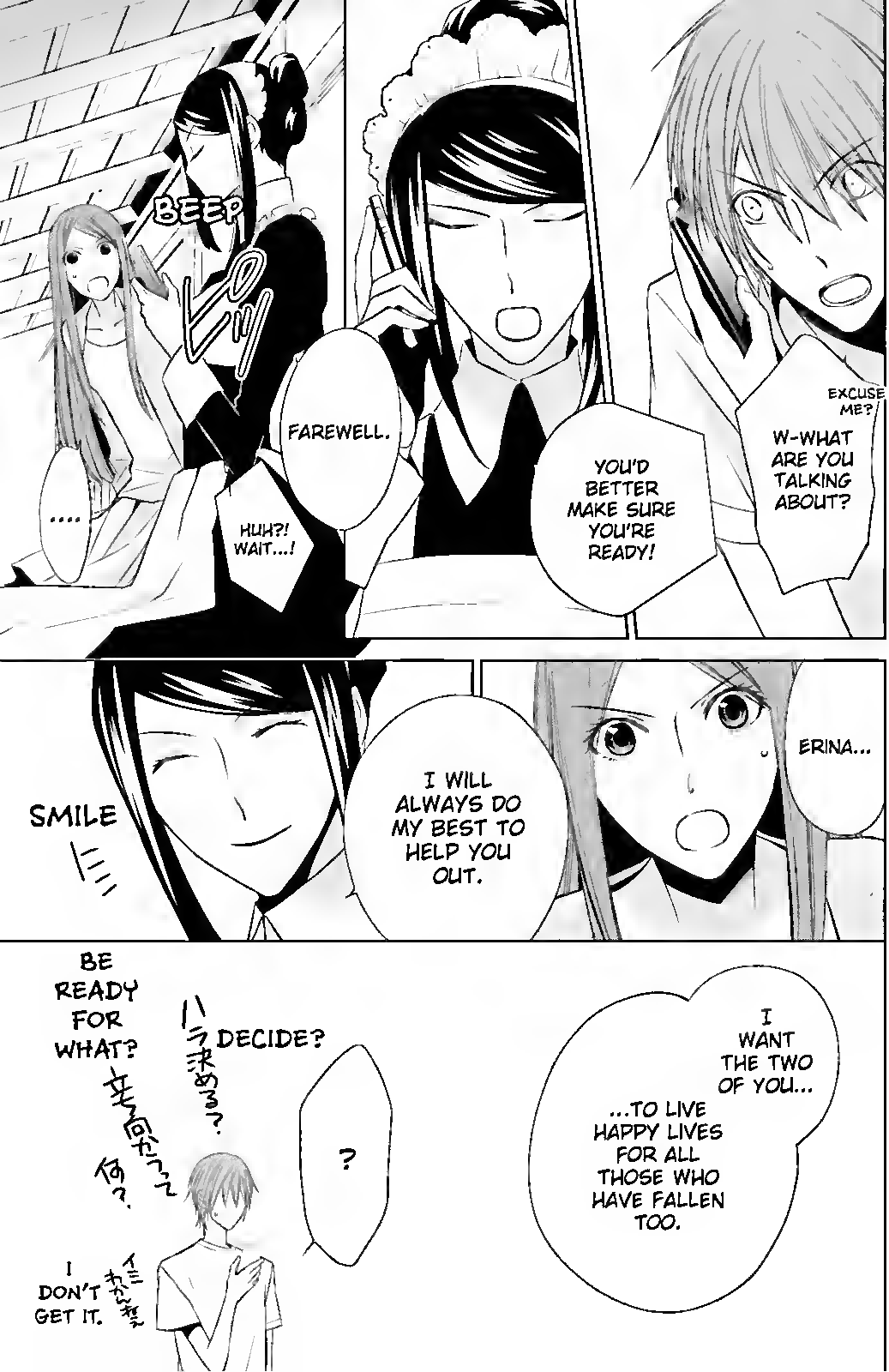
AFTER THE BATTLE AT SHISEIKAN...
.. HE WAS RELEASED FROM JUVENILE DETENTION ...
...AND GOT THE LICENSE FOR HIS CURRENT JOB.
HIS CRIMINAL RECORD MADE IT THAT MUCH HARDER, BUT SOME PEOPLE HELPED HIM OUT.
HE SAYS THAT HE'S HAPPY AND SATISFIED BECAUSE HE'S DOING WHAT HE WANTS TO DO.

EVEN WHEN HE SMILES...
BUT I'VE SEEN HIM.
...HE'S ALWAYS LOOKING OFF INTO THE DISTANCE.
EVER SINCE THE LAST DAY AT SHISEIKAN.

SO MUCH THAT HE COULDN'T HIDE IT.
BUT...
SOMETHING SEEMS TO HAVE RATTLED HIM RECENTLY.
IS THAT THE REASON YOU HAD AN ARGUMENT?
IT'S NOT TRUE...
...IBUKI.
THAT'S WHY...
IBUKI'S ALWAYS SO CHEERFUL.
I'VE BEEN THINKING THIS FOR SOME TIME...
...BUT YOU'RE ALWAYS...
...FEELING LOW.
EVEN SO...
...HE IS STILL SMILING.

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S INFURIATING?!
AH...
AND THEN IT TURNED INTO AN ARGUMENT...
IT ESCALATED AND...
...THEN!
EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT THE REASON IS...
...BUT I CAN'T MAKE HIM STOP LYING TO HIMSELF!
IT'S SOMETHING I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT...
SWOOSH
IS THAT...
...BECAUSE IT IS ABOUT...
SHISEIKAN?

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
VERY WELL.
HUH?
I WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH LETTING ONE OF MY DARLING HOMEGIRLS LOOK SO SAD.
HUH?? Homegirl?
BEEP
BEEP
BBRRNG
GWRRAR
HELLO?
OH, HELLO. IBUKI?
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING TO MY GIRL?
HUH?!
IBUKI.
IT'S TIME TO MAKE A DECISION.


BEEP
ピッ
....
HUH?! WAIT...!
FAREWELL.
YOU'D BETTER MAKE SURE YOU'RE READY!
EXCUSE ME?
W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SMILE
ニコニコ
I WILL ALWAYS DO MY BEST TO HELP YOU OUT.
ERINA...
BE READY FOR WHAT?
何？
ハラ決める？
DECIDE?
？
I DON'T GET IT.
イミわかんねぇ
...TO LIVE HAPPY LIVES FOR ALL THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN TOO.
I WANT THE TWO OF YOU...

SO, HONEY...
I VISITED THE SCHOOL.
THAT TEACHER WAS AS GOOD AS THEY SAY.
OH?
RUSSLE
HE'S CHEERY, FUN, AND HE'S REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT TEACHING. THE KIDS JUST LOVE HIM.
OH?
PWSHH
YUI REALLY LIKES HIM TOO, RIGHT?
OH?
RIGHT!
SO...
I ALREADY APPLIED FOR THE TRANSFER.
WHAT?!
IT'LL BE FUN, RIGHT, YUI?!
RIGHT!

DAY CARE
YUI, YOUR DAD IS HERE!
SO THAT'S THAT, HONEY.
I NEED YOU TO PICK HER UP TOMORROW.
HUH...
WHAAAAT?
WHAT THE...
HUH?
NO WAY...
"TAKAHARA"?
YOU'RE...
MR. TAKAHARA

T...
MAKIO SHIINA?!
IBUKI TAKAHARA!
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY MET IN NINE YEARS.
DADDY.
YUI SHIINA

From
Sub
"BLAH BLAH BLAH... IBUKI IS HAVING A FIGHT WITH ERINA."
I HAVE A TEXT FROM KASUGA!
ALREADY SENT HIS DAUGHTER HOME.
子供は家に帰した。
HUH?!
ピロン!
RING
"ALSO, PLEASE THANK YOUR WIFE FOR ME WITH REGARDS TO YUI'S TRANSFER..."
HOLD ON, KASUGA KNOWS MY WIFE?
When did that happen?!
I WANNA DIE.
WHAT THE...?
"PLEASE TAKE CARE OF IBUKI!"
BEEP
ピロ
BEEP
ピロ
ピロ
ピロ
!
ACTUALLY ...
DON'T GIVE ME THAT!
AND THIS TEXT IS WAY TOO LONG!
I'M REALLY SORRY.
LOOKS LIKE MY WHOLE FAMILY GOT INVOLVED IN YOUR FIGHT.

Y-YEAH, THERE'S SOMETHING UP WITH KASUGA...
WELL, I THINK I'LL BE HEADING HOME.
NO, I'LL ACCEPT THIS DUTY.
UGH!.
ACTUALLY ...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
GRIP
HAS IT BEEN NINE YEARS?
YEAH ...
YOU DIDN'T EVEN CONTACT US ALL THIS TIME.
TO BE HONEST...

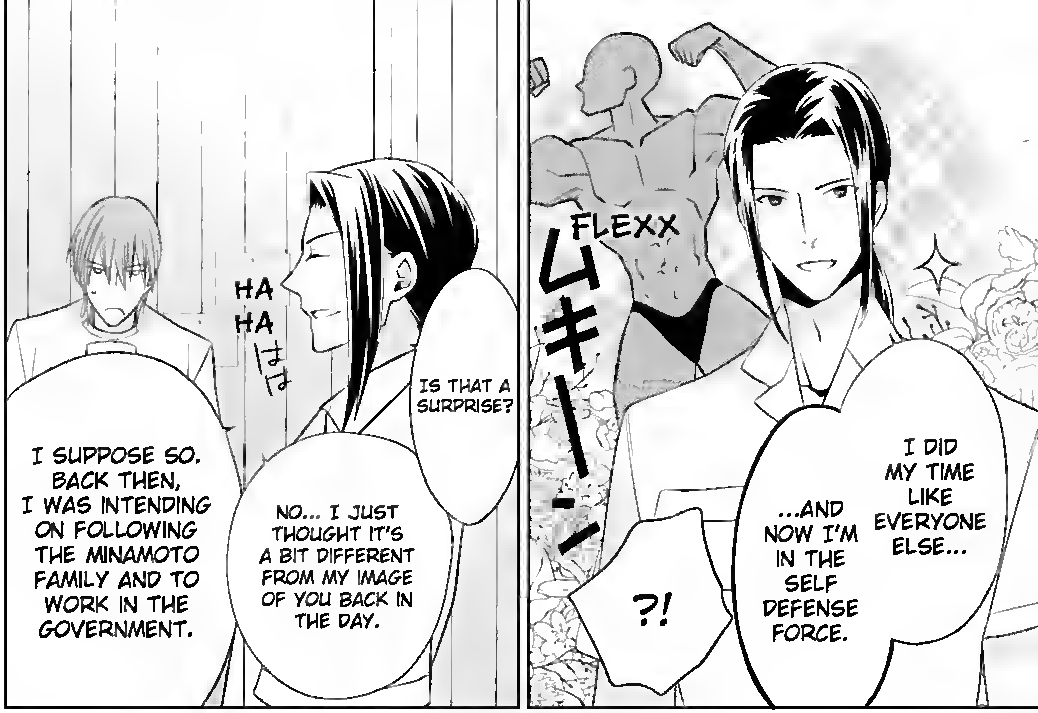
WE MET TODAY, SO DON'T RUN AWAY.
OUT OF THE SURVIVORS OF SHISEIKAN...
...MAKIO WAS THE ONE I WANTED TO SEE LEAST.
BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED WITH REN.
AM I GOING TO GET BEAT UP?
KREEK
OR GET IMPRISONED IN A DUNGEON
地下に監禁されたり…
HERE IT IS.
THIS WAY.
IT'S DARK.
WHERE IS THIS PLACE? YOU COME HERE OFTEN?
YEAH.

SHIINA...
...AND...
HUH?
IS THAT...
...TAKAHARA?

BAAH
SOUMA ...?!
IBUKI! WHAT THE HELL, MAN!
YOU NEVER GAVE US A CALL ALL THESE YEARS AND THEN YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO JUST SHOW UP!
WELL?!
AHHHHHH!
I...
I COULDN'T FACE EVERYONE FROM SHISEIKAN!
S-SORRY!
NOPE BUT I'M STILL AN UPPER-CLASSMAN, AND HE SHOULDA FOLLOWED THE RULES
CHIKARA, WERE YOU WORRIED ABOUT HIM?
THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU.
YOU KNOW.

EXCUSE ME.
CLING
EXACTLY WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE.
HUH?
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
PRESIDENT MINAMOTO ?!
WOW! WHAT'RE THE ODDS?
Hmph!
PERFECT TIMING.
WE'RE CLOSING UP FOR THE DAY.
HM?
Aren't you—?
SHOULD I COME BACK SOME OTHER TIME?
?!
IT'S NOISY IN HERE.
ARE YOU BUSY?
SLAM
DRINK UP.
RESERVED
本日貸切
SLAM
WE'VE GOT LOTS TO CATCH UP ON.

AFTER THE BATTLE AT SHISEIKAN...
...WE DID OUR TIME, AND THEN WE OPENED OUR OWN PLACE.
THIS IS OUR PLACE.
THE PREZ HERE IS A REGULAR.
YEP.
SHIINA'S POPPED IN A FEW TIMES TOO
TH...
THANKS ..
KAZUE, YOUR ARM...
IT WAS TAKEN DURING THAT BATTLE.
EH, HE SURVIVED.
I'VE GOT CHIKARA, SO I'LL BE FINE.
.... I should've expected
WHAT ABOUT YOU, PRESIDENT MINAMOTO?


HA HA はは
I SUPPOSE SO. BACK THEN, I WAS INTENDING ON FOLLOWING THE MINAMOTO FAMILY AND TO WORK IN THE GOVERNMENT.
NO... I JUST THOUGHT IT'S A BIT DIFFERENT FROM MY IMAGE OF YOU BACK IN THE DAY.
IS THAT A SURPRISE?
FLEXX
ムキー
?!
...AND NOW I'M IN THE SELF DEFENSE FORCE.
I DID MY TIME LIKE EVERYONE ELSE...

BUT AFTER EXPERIENCING THE BATTLE AT SHISEIKAN...
...I WANTED TO PROTECT WHAT I HOLD DEAR WITH MY OWN HANDS.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, SHIINA?
NOTHING SPECIAL
AFTER GETTING OUT OF THE KLINK...
...I MANAGED TO GET A DESK JOB.
I MARRIED THE GIRL THAT'S BEEN WITH ME SINCE HIGH SCHOOL...
...AND WE HAD A CHILD.
OH...
THAT'S NICE.
I'M LIVING AN UPSTANDING LIFE TOO.
I'M A TEACHER AT A DAY CARE.
OH?
HAPPY...
I'M VERY HAPPY.
WHY DO YOU LOOK UNHAPPY?
BEING ALL QUIET...
HUH ?!
NOT AT ALL!

AT FIRST, I WANTED TO BE AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER.
HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD MADE THAT KIND OF HARD.
HA HA!
I guess it would!
IT'S NO LAUGHING MATTER! 笑いごとじゃゆずっ。
BUT I WANTED TO DO SOME KIND OF WORK CONNECTED TO THE FUTURE.

OH?
....
WITH ALL THIS TALK, THIS FEELS JUST LIKE A CLASS REUNION.
IT'S PRETTY MUCH IS.
WITH JUST THE FIVE OF US.
BRING IT ON!

BACK THEN, WE ALL DID WHAT WE WANTED, AND ONLY THE FIVE OF US ARE LEFT.
KLINK
IT'S ENOUGH.
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.

IBUKI.
SNAP OUT OF IT.
YOU'RE STILL A SWORDSMAN FROM SHISEIKAN.
Well, former swordsman...
SMAK
OFF!
OH?
MAKIO.
BRING HIM BACK HERE AGAIN SOON.
YES, SIR!

IBUKI, DID YOU HAVE FUN TODAY?
HUH?
NO, MAYBE NOT.
YEAH...
EVEN AFTER NINE YEARS.
NOBODY CHANGED AT ALL.
EVERYONE COULD TELL YOU WEREN'T SMILING DEEP DOWN.
YOU THINK WE COULDN'T TELL?
YOU'RE LYING.
HUH? OF COURSE I DID. WHY WOULDN'T I?
YOU DIDN'T SMILE EVEN ONCE.

SHE'S RIGHT.
...IBUKI IS STUCK IN THE PAST."
KASUGA ALSO WROTE IN HER MESSAGE...
WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY "THAT'S NICE," WHEN I SAID I WAS HAPPY?
WHAT DID YOU MEAN SAYING YOU COULDN'T FACE US?
THIS IS BAD...
WHAT DID YOU DO THAT LAST NINE YEARS?
I DIDN'T SMILE RIGHT?
DID THAT DAY NINE YEARS AGO...
...BECOME YOUR SHACKLES FOR TODAY?
HEY, HARUMA...
GRCCH

REN!
REN!
ANSWER ME!
REN!
I CAN'T SAY IT...
IBUKI!
HEY!
SAY SOMETHING!
...
GRRR
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN SAY IT.
ESPECIALLY NOT TO MAKIO.
....
WHOA!
TMMP
ZAGG
WHAT?

GULP
WHERE ARE WE?
HEY...
WHAT ARE YOU-?
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
YES?
THIS IS...
SHINDO DOJO
...THE SHINDO DOJO!
HUH?
IBUKI AND MAKIO?!
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU AT THIS HOUR.
CAN WE BORROW YOUR DOJO FOR A LITTLE, YUKARI?

GET UP.
SLAM
AND TAKE THE SWORD.
SHFF
!
IF YOU WON'T TALK ON YOUR OWN...
...THEN I'LL FORCE YOU DO.

DON'T DISAPPOINT ME.
THIS IS WHERE SEISHIRO, HARUMA...
...AND JIN USED TO TRAIN.
I WON'T LET YOU TELL LIES HERE!
END

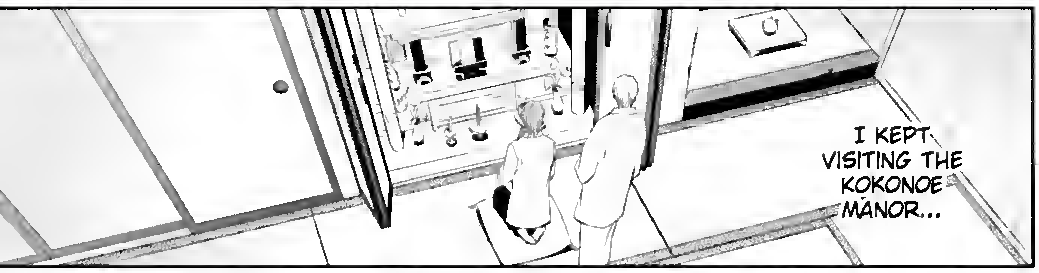
#35.5 [ANOTHER STORY]: THE PROPOSAL - PART 2

HUFF
KRACK
PUFF
KLACK
KLACK
HUFF
HUFF
WOW.
YOU'RE REALLY RUSTY, AREN'T YOU?
HUFF
HUFF
ZWIPP
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D USE A SWORD AGAIN.
YOU TOO.
EVEN SO!
I'M GONNA WIN!
FOR SURE!
!
SWOOP

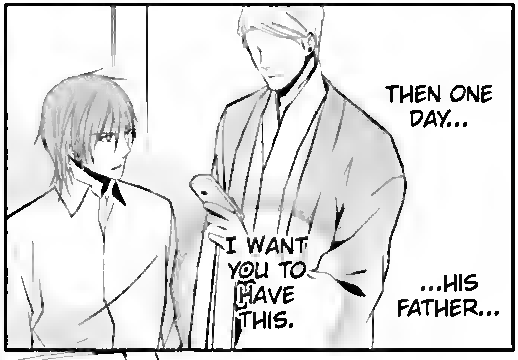
SWOOP
BECAUSE IT BRINGS BACK...
...TOO MANY MEMORIES.
KLACK

IT'S OVER.
I WON.
SPILL IT.
YOU CAN'T EVEN FOCUS ON A DUEL.
WHAT'S EATING AT YOU ANYWAY?
SAY IT!
SKRRCH
I SAID I HAVEN'T SEEN...
...ANY OF YOU FOR NINE YEARS.
BUT THAT WAS A LIE.

THE TRUTH IS...
...I WENT TO HARUMA'S ON THE DAY OF HIS DEATH...
...EVERY MONTH.


I KEPT VISITING THE KOKONOE MANOR...

...GAVE ME THIS PHONE AS A KEEPSAKE.


THEN ONE DAY...
I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS.
...HIS FATHER...

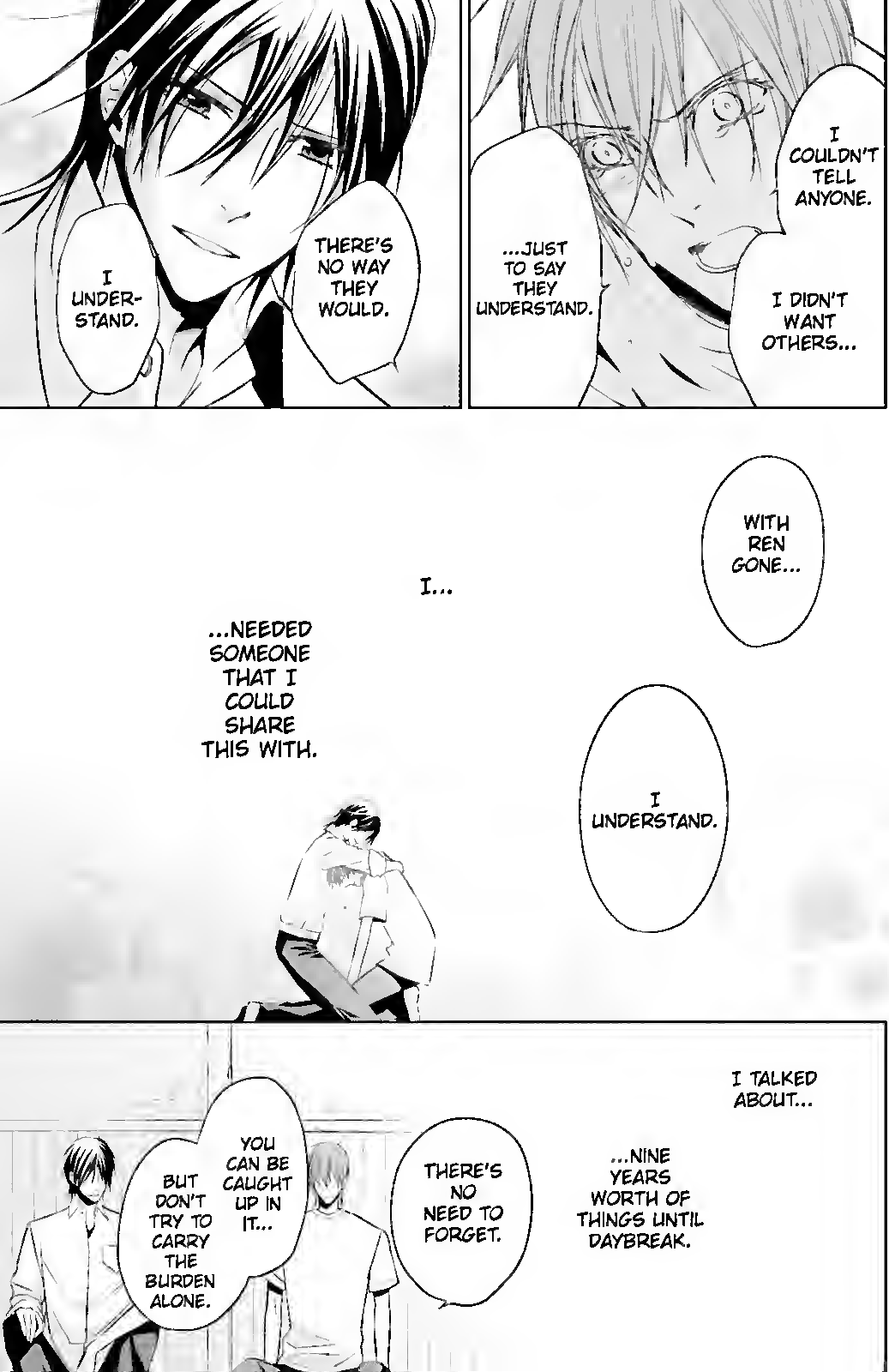
DRAFTS
Date 20XX/11/26
To IBUKI
Title
IBUKI,

THERE...

THERE WAS A MESSAGE HE STARTED TO WRITE ON HIS LAST DAY ALIVE.
WHAT DID HE WANT TO SAY TO ME?
SO MANY DIFFERENT EMOTIONS SPUN INSIDE ME.
I WANTED TO SCREAM, BUT...
...IT WAS MY FAULT THAT HE COULDN'T FINISH HIS MESSAGE – NO ONE ELSE'S.
I BOTTLED UP MY FEELINGS.
I SMILED SO NO ONE WOULD KNOW.
I LET HARUMA DIE.
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY IT.

NOT ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO FOUGHT WITH US...
...THOUGHT THAT YOU LET HIM DIE.
AND THAT SURVIVOR'S GUILT YOU'RE HAVING...
...IS WHAT WE ALL FEEL.
NOW I GET IT.
JUST SAY IT OUT LOUD.
WHAT CAN'T YOU SAY?
I TOOK REN FROM YOU...
...SO YOU'RE THE LAST ONE I CAN SAY IT TO.
I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY.
I KNOW THIS FEELING... THAT HAS IBUKI IN HIS CLUTCHES.
I SAID IT'S FINE! SO TALK!
SAY IT!

PSST
I'M LONELY.
WHEN I REALIZE IT...
...I THINK TO MYSELF
WHY ISN'T HE BY MY SIDE?
HE'S GONE.
AND I FEEL SO ALONE.
I HAVE NO RIGHT...
...TO SAY THAT AT ALL!
BUT...


I COULDN'T TELL ANYONE.
I DIDN'T WANT OTHERS...
...JUST TO SAY THEY UNDERSTAND.
THERE'S NO WAY THEY WOULD.
I UNDER-STAND.
WITH REN GONE...
I...
...NEEDED SOMEONE THAT I COULD SHARE THIS WITH.
I UNDERSTAND.
I TALKED ABOUT...
...NINE YEARS WORTH OF THINGS UNTIL DAYBREAK.
THERE'S NO NEED TO FORGET.
YOU CAN BE CAUGHT UP IN IT...
BUT DON'T TRY TO CARRY THE BURDEN ALONE.

HUH...?
IF YOU FEEL LONELY, COME VISIT.
THANKS.
Y-YUI WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU.
THANK YOU BOTH.
IBUKI! MAKIO!
TMP
TMP
YUKARI ...
...AND KASUG...
YOU'VE FINALLY WORKED THROUGH IT.
I CAN MOVE ON.
BUT I'M OKAY NOW.

...GONNA GET BRUSHED ASIDE LIKE THAT?
HUH?
WE'RE JUST...
GASP
AH!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR THAT!
IBUKI!
ERINA...
...IS IN TROUBLE!
PSST
PSST
PSST

A CROWD?
PSST
PSST
WHY AT SHISEIKAN?
WITH THE SCHOOL CLOSED DOWN, NO ONE EVEN CAME NEAR HERE.
YOU HEARD THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT TEARING DOWN SHISEIKAN?
YES.
I HEARD PEOPLE WHO THOUGHT THE SCHOOL WAS A CREEPY PLACE...
...AND PEOPLE WHO WANTED SWORDS BANNED...
HAVE ARGUED WITH PEOPLE WHO SAW THE STUDENTS OF SHISEIKAN AS HEROES WHO STOPPED REIJI'S SCHEME...
...AND THEY STILL HAVEN'T COME TO A CONCLUSION.
YES.
THIS WAY.
IT'S NEAR THE FIELD.
THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DEMOLISH THE SCHOOL TIRED OF THE LONG WAIT...
...AND ARE NOW TAKING SHISEIKAN BY FORCE.
BUT...
SKREECH
SCRCCH
SAVE THE SCHOOL!

TWING
SAVE THE SCHOOL!
HEY...
Hmm?
SHEEN
THAT'S...
GLITTER
GOLD...
...MANE...
GLITTER
ERINA?!
HEY, THIS IS BAD!
HEY, IBUKI!
FWSSH
!!
DON'T TOUCH ME!
!
CUT IT OUT, WOMAN!
WHAT IS SHE DOING?
WHY DID SHE DYE HER HAIR GOLD AGAIN?

STOP WITH THAT BULLHORN!
その拡声器を、やめねえか!!
FIRST OFF...
まず
GET OUT!
WE CAN DEMOLISH THE BUILDING WITH YOU IN IT!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP THIS UP?
つぬりゃねえか!!
THEY'LL HEAR EVERYTHING!
I WON'T GIVE IN TO YOUR THREATS!
GO AHEAD AND TRY!
DON'T LET THOSE SWORD-HATERS DO WHATEVER THEY WANT!
そーだ
YEAH!
そーだ
YEAH!
UGH...
UGH!
...SACRIFICED THEIR OWN LIVES TO STOP THE TRUE SWORD-BEARERS AND REIJI'S CONSPIRACY!
THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE YOUTH OF SHISEIKAN, OUTCASTS IN THEIR OWN TIME...
I WILL PROTECT SHISEIKAN!
I SWEAR I WON'T GIVE IN...
...ON THIS ONCE AGAIN GOLDEN MANE!
YAAAA
おお
おお

SKREECH
HEY, FORCE THAT WOMAN OUT OF HERE!
NO...!
THERE'S NO END TO THIS!
WE WEREN'T THAT SPECIAL!
THAT'S QUITE A STORY!
AND WHY IS ERINA DOING THIS?
She's so reckless.
...
UNNNGH
HEROES, MY ASS!
HURRY UP AND LET GO!
THIS PLACE IS NOTHING MORE THAN A MURDER SCENE!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF KEEPING THIS ACCURSED PLACE AROUND?!
GRRR
ERINA!

THIS PLACE MEANS SO MUCH...
YOU DON'T GET IT!
THIS PLACE MEANS MORE THAN THAT!
...TO SO MANY PEOPLE. THEIR MEMORIES, HOPES, AND DREAMS ARE HERE!
YEAH!
GET HER OUT OF HERE!
LEMME GO!
PUT ME DOWN!
HEY! HOLD STILL!
THIS PLACE...
PLEASE, NOT THIS PLACE...
WHOOP
!!
THAT'S CRAZY TALK.

WHAFF
PLEASE DON'T TAKE ANYTHING ELSE FROM HIM.
DON'T TAKE THIS PLACE FROM IBUKI!

DROP
KREEK
WHOA?!
SLIP
OH...
SHOOT!
ERINA!
WAHHH
WISSH

KLACK
BANG
SMAK
BANG
KLACK
BANG
YAANK
!!

KRASH
OW...
I...
IBUKI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
ERINA.
LET'S GET MARRIED.

H-HUH?!
DID YOU HIT YOUR HEAD ON SOME-THING?!
NEVER MIND THAT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! YOU DROPPED THAT PHONE!
GO AFTER IT AND...
ERINA.
IT'S...
...FINE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

13"
DROP
YOU WERE ALWAYS LYING...
YOU SMILED, BUT YOU WERE ALWAYS HURTING.
I COULD ONLY WATCH.
YEAH.
BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY PLACE FOR ME TO GO INTO YOUR HEART.
I KNEW THAT.
YEAH.
BUT...
...I STILL WANTED TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU.
YEAH.
I'M SORRY.
AND THANK YOU...
BACK THEN...
...AND EVEN NOW.
I'LL NEED YOU FROM NOW ON TOO.
FOREVER.
TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH TO SAY THAT.

PSST...?
WE, THE FORMER STUDENTS OF SHISEIKAN, WILL ACCEPT THE DEMOLITION.
?!
...AREN'T STUFFED IN THAT BOX OVER THERE.
YOU NEED TO FEEL THOSE FEELINGS...
OUR MEMORIES AND WHAT HOLDS US TOGETHER...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

...PAIN ...
...LONELINESS FOR WHAT THEY ARE.
AND JUST KEEP MOVING TOWARD...
...THE FUTURE.
I'LL MOVE ON.
THANKS.
THANK YOU.

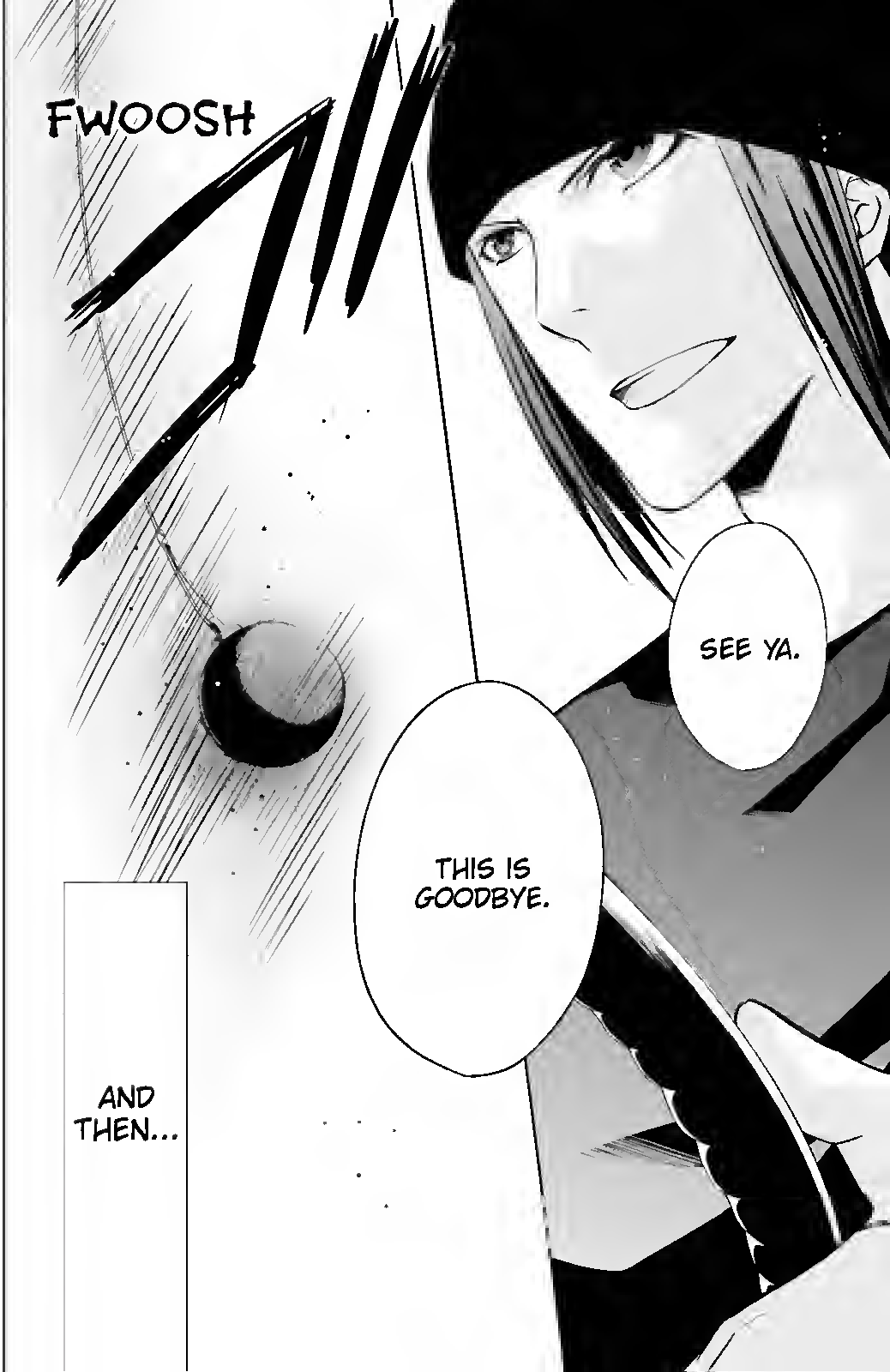
CLAP
WELL SAID.
!
S...
SENSYU?!
WHAT?
YOU'RE STILL ALIVE?!
SUCH AS IT IS.
AFTER THE FINAL BATTLE AT SHISEIKAN...
I GOUGED OUT MY EYES TO CARVE THAT MOST BEAUTIFUL SIGHT INTO MY MEMORY FOR ALL OF ETERNITY.
YOU'VE REACHED THAT STAGE AS WELL.
AS LONG AS WHAT YOU HOLD PRECIOUS IS WITHIN YOU, THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
WELL, THEN...
ARRGH! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
SNAP
?!
RMMBLE

SHAKE
ANY PROBLEMS? IF SO, STEP RIGHT UP. I'LL CRUSH YOU.
NOT WITH THE FAMOUS SUGATANI CONGLOMERATE...
WE'LL BE DEMOLISHING IT AS PER YOUR REQUEST. YOU DON'T HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS, DO YOU?
天下の菅谷財閥にめっそうもない
.....!!
IS THIS OKAY?
It's fine.
RMMBLE
THE DEMOLITION HAS JUST BEEN...
...TAKEN OVER BY SUGATANI CONSTRUCTION
WE HAVE TAKEN FULL RIGHTS TO IT.

IT'S THE END.
WE SHOULD BE THE ONES TO SEE IT OFF.

MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE...
A FEW DAYS LATER...
...THE STORY OF SHISEIKAN...
...CAME TO AN END.

...WITH MANY DIFFERENT FEELINGS IN THEIR HEARTS.
...WATCHED IT'S FINAL MOMENTS...


FWOOSH
SEE YA.
THIS IS GOODBYE.
AND THEN...

YEARS LATER...
WHO LEARNS HOW TO USE SWORDS NOW?
IT'S DUMB.
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT WANTED TO DO IT...
...HARUKI.
I SAID I MIGHT WANT TO LEARN.
CHATTER
OH.
CHATTER
THEY'RE HERE.
KASUGA!
HARUKI IS FINALLY...
EVERYONE!
SHINDO DOJO
...HERE!

OH, MY.
WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, HARUKI.
HI, GRANDPA KOKONOE!
WELCOME, HARUKI!
HI, MS. YUKARI AND MS. ITSUKI!
OH, YUI TOO?!
WELCOME, SHIINA.
HELLO.
HELLO. MY DAUGHTER JUST LOVES THIS PLACE...
SO, HARUKI.
IS THIS THE DAY?
YOU'VE MADE YOUR DECISION, RIGHT?
YOU BASICALLY DECIDED FOR ME!
!
....
....
END

'CAUSE IT'S THE FINAL VOLUME.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM FANS: PART 1

QUESTION: WHAT ARE EVERYONE'S CHARACTER PROFILES?!

Name	Birthday	Blood Type	Height (cm)	Weight (kg)	Class
Haruma Kokonoe	3/15	A	168	54	1-1
Ibuki Takahara	7/1	B	172	57	1-1
Jin Saito	5/23	O	180	72	2-1
Hidehito Shikimori	10/1	A	182	74	2-1
Seishiro Shindo	4/13	A	176	63	×
Senshu Sugatani	6/2	AB	175	60	1-3
Makio Shiina	9/12	B	175	65	1-1
Ren Katakura	7/7	B	177	66	1-1
Hajime Kaneda	8/5	B	170	58	1-1
Yukari Shindo	6/10	O	156	Secret	×
Tomoe Kasuga	9/24	AB	172	Secret	×
Nobuchika Odani	11/8	O	187	80	×
Yoshichika Odani	3/3	A	188	82	×
Itsuki Odani	1/5	B	158	Secret	×
Chikara Souma	9/6	AB	178	66	2-1
Kazue Souma	9/6	B	178	66	2-2
Ukyo Tsuruhe	12/1	B	192	80	2-3
Yukinari Kokonoe	2/27	A	185	72	×

ABOUT HARUMA

QUESTION: WHY DOES HARUMA HAVE THAT HAIRSTYLE?

IT'S BASED ON THE HAIRSTYLE OF A CHARACTER FROM A MUSIC GAME THAT I LIKE. WHEN I WAS CREATING HARUMA'S CHARACTER,

QUESTION: DOES HARUMA TIE HIS OWN HAIR? IT'S THE SAME SINCE HE WAS A KID...

HAIR, SEISHIRO TIED IT FOR HARUMA, BECAUSE THE HAIR WOULD INTERFERE WITH HIS SWORD LESSONS. AFTER HE GREW UP, HARUMA BEGAN TYING IT HIMSELF.

QUESTION: WHAT IS JIN'S FIANCÉE'S NAME?

ABOUT JIN AND HIS FIANCÉE.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JIN AND HIS FIANCÉE?

QUESTION: WHAT DID JIN THINK OF HIS FIANCÉE?

THEY'VE BEEN LIKE SIBLINGS EVER SINCE THEY WERE CHILDREN, SO THEY ARE LIKE FAMILY IN SOME WAYS. THEY HAVE WARM FEELINGS FOR EACH OTHER AND CARE DEEPLY FOR ONE ANOTHER.

QUESTION: HOW DID THE TWO OF THEM MEET?

THEIR GRANDFATHERS WERE OLD FRIENDS, AND THEY SAID THAT IF THEY EVER HAVE GRANDCHILDREN, THEY WOULD HAVE THEM MARRY. BECAUSE OF THAT, THEY WERE ENGAGED THE MOMENT JIN WAS BORN.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM FANS: PART 2

SAIDO: IT'S THE FINAL VOLUME...

THE SOUMA BROTHERS

QUESTION: I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE SOUMA BROTHERS' LOVE LIFE! EVERYTHING ABOUT THEM, THEIR HEIGHT AND WEIGHT, AND EVEN THEIR GRADES ARE EXACTLY THE SAME, SO WOULD THEY EVER FALL FOR THE SAME GIRL? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN THEN?

THE SOUMA BROTHERS ONLY NEED EACH OTHER, SO THEY'RE VERY MATURE IN THAT THEY DON'T REALLY NEED A CERTAIN WOMAN.

QUESTION: I'M INTERESTED IN THE EMBARRASSING PHOTOS OF THE SOUMA BROTHERS' PASTS. WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT THESE PHOTOS?

THEY HAVEN'T EVEN SHOWN EACH OTHER THE PHOTOS, SO THERE'S NO WAY THAT WE WILL EVER SEE THEM! (WHEN I WAS CREATING THE STORY FOR THE FINAL CHAPTER, I CONSIDERED HAVING THE SOUMA BROTHERS DIE. THEY WOULD EXCHANGE EACH OTHER'S PHOTOS, AND DIE LAUGHING.)

THE OTHERS

QUESTION: I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MAKIO AND HIS GIRLFRIEND! WHEN DID THEY MEET?

AFTER MAKIO GOT INTO HIGH SCHOOL, THE GIRL, WHO WAS A NON-SWORD BEARER, ASKED HIM OUT, AND THEY STARTED DATING. THEY STARTED OUT AS AN ORDINARY COUPLE, BUT HE CARES ABOUT HER DEEPLY BECAUSE SHE STUCK BY HIM DURING THE SWORD-BEARER PROBLEM.

QUESTION: WOULDN'T JIN EVER WONDER WHY MAKIO'S HAIRSTYLE IS THE SAME AS HIS?

JIN IS VERY PERCEPTIVE, BUT HE DOESN'T REALLY NOTICE DETAILS LIKE THAT. WHEN HIDEHITO OR REN SAID THAT MAKI RESPECTED JIN VERY MUCH, JIN WOULD FINALLY REALIZE IT. JIN WAS FOND OF HOW MAKIO DOES THINGS WHOLEHEARTEDLY. IF JIN WERE TO THANK MAKIO, IT WOULD START A COMBO WHERE MAKIO GETS OUT (EXCITED) AND THEN POUNCES.

QUESTION: REN'S NAME IS EVEN SPELLED WITH THE CHARACTER FOR "LOVE." I WONDER WHAT KIND OF LOVE HE'S EXPERIENCED. HOW OLD WAS HE WHEN HE HAD HIS FIRST LOVE?

THINGS GOT GOING IN PRESCHOOL DAYS. IT WAS WITH A CUTE GIRL AT THE SAME SCHOOL. BUT HE ALSO BLUSHED WHENEVER HE WAS IN FRONT OF THE YOUNG AND PRETTY TEACHER AT THE SCHOOL TOO. HE WAS A SUCKER FOR PRETTY FACES EVEN BACK THEN. DESPITE HIS NAME, HE NEVER REALLY HAD ANY ROMANTIC SUCCESS. (CONTRACTION: NOT REALLY FOND OF THE NAME REN TO BEGIN WITH.)

QUESTION: WHAT DOES YUKARI THINK OF KANEDA?

UNFORTUNATELY, HE NEVER NOTICED HIS FEELINGS FOR HER...

ALTHOUGH I LIKE INTERNAL DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT LIKE THAT TOO.

QUESTION: WHAT DO THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS THINK OF HIDEHITO? ALSO, WHAT DOES HIDEHITO THINK OF THEM? (LIKE THE MEMBERS HE'S MOST FOND OF.)

THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS THINK HE'S A RELIABLE PERSON AND AMAZING FOR BEING ABLE TO HOLD HIS OWN AGAINST JIN. HIDEHITO THINKS THE NEW STUDENTS ARE LIVELY AND GOOD KIDS. I DROPPED THIS IDEA, BUT I THOUGHT ABOUT HAVING HIDEHITO BE LITTLE JEALOUS OF HARUMA BECAUSE OF HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH JIN. BUT I WENT WITH HOW HIDEHITO IS COMPLETELY LOYAL TO JIN AND NOTHING ELSE.

QUESTION: IS THERE A SECRET ORIGIN FOR THESE CHARACTERS?

FIRST, JIN AND HIDEHITO WERE INSPIRED BY A DISCUSSION I HAD WITH MY EDITOR ABOUT A STORY FEATURING CHARACTERS THAT WERE LIKE A LORD AND A VASSAL AND SIMILAR TO HEROES YOU MIGHT SEE IN A CERTAIN STYLISH ACTION GAME. I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE THEY WOULD WORK AS THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF A STORY, SO BASIC IDEA OF HARUMA CAME FROM THAT. AT FIRST, I'D PLANNED FOR HIM TO BE A GIRL, AND AT ONE POINT I WAS CALLING HIM OSCAR, WHICH WAS HIS TEMPORARY NAME.

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE ANY STORIES WHERE THOUGHTS ABOUT A PARTICULAR THING INSPIRED A CHARACTER?

I HAD LAID OUT THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE CHARACTERS BEFORE SERIALIZATION STARTED, BUT I GOT A REQUEST TO MAKE AS MANY COOL CHARACTERS AS POSSIBLE FOR THE SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS. TSURUGIBE IS THE ONLY ONE THAT WAS THERE FROM THE BEGINNING. CHIKARA WAS BASED ON A CERTAIN CHARACTER IN A NOVEL THAT MY EDITOR WAS REALLY INTO AT THE TIME.

QUESTION: DID YOU FIND ANY PARTICULAR MOMENTS MEMORABLE?

THIS WILL BE A SPECIFIC SCENE. IT'S WHERE HARUMA AND IBUKI WERE SMILING TOGETHER. ALSO, WHERE JIN SAYS HE THOUGHT OF HARUMA AS HIS LITTLE BROTHER.

QUESTION: WHEN DID YOU THINK OF THAT ENDING?

I HAD THOUGHT OF THE STORY EVEN BEFORE SERIALIZATION STARTED. IT'S THE STORY OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT WERE A DYING BREED, BUT STILL STRUGGLED TO THE VERY END.

QUESTION: DID YOU DECIDE FOR JIN TO DIE IN THE BEGINNING?

I HAD TOYED WITH THE IDEA OF EVERYONE DYING. BUT I DECIDED FOR JIN TO DIE FIRST WHILE WRITING THE STORY. I HAD ALSO CONSIDERED HAVING IBUKI DIE INSTEAD OF JIN.

QUESTION: IF YOU SAW HARUMA BEFORE YOU, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO HIM AFTER HE MATURED A LOT SINCE VOLUME 1? ALSO, WHAT DO YOU THINK HARUMA WOULD SAY TO YOU?

IT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO TALK TO A CHARACTER I CREATED, BUT I DID PUT HIM THROUGH A LOT OF HARDSHIPS. I JUST WANT TO SAY, "YOU DID GREAT." I MIGHT SAY "GOOD FOR YOU" TO HIM. HE MIGHT GET BENT OUT OF SHAPE.

AND THAT'S IT! THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT *SAMURAI DRIVE* WERE RECEIVED VIA TWITTER. SOME WERE USED AS-IS AND SOME WERE SHORTENED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM FANS: PART 3

SAMURAI DRIVE!

THANK YOU FOR READING *SAMURAI DRIVE* TO THE VERY END. THIS IS MY VERY FIRST ORIGINAL COMIC, AND I PUT A LOT OF ELEMENTS OF THINGS I LIKED INTO IT. THANKS TO EVERYONE, IT WAS A CLUMSY, YET VERY MEMORABLE WORK FOR ME. I WAS THE ONE WHO DECIDED TO END THE STORY THIS WAY, BUT I FELT LIKE CRYING AS I WAS DRAWING THE FINAL SCENES. I WAS ABLE TO FEEL SAD TO SEE THIS WORK GO AND WRITE WHILE SO IMMERSED IN THIS WORLD BECAUSE I WAS ENCOURAGED BY ALL THE FANS WHO SAID THEY LIKED MY WORK AND THESE CHARACTERS.
I RECEIVED LETTERS, MESSAGES, FAN ART, AND EVEN HAD A CD AUDIO DRAMA MADE TOO. I WENT OUT TO THE EVENTS, DID AUTOGRAPH SESSIONS, AND MUCH MORE. IT'S BEEN ABOUT FOUR YEARS SINCE THE ONE-SHOT COMIC ZERO. IT WAS SO FUN TO WORK ON THIS.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOUR SUPPORT I WAS ABLE TO DRAW THE ENTIRE STORY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

YOU MAY SEE ME SOMEWHERE ON THE INTERNET. IF YOU SEE *SAMURAI DRIVE* CHARACTERS AROUND SOMEWHERE I HOPE YOU'LL BE KIND TO THEM!
SEE YOU AGAIN!

AUGUST 2013, FUJIKO KOSUMI.

SPECIAL THANKS
WAKABAYASHI, EVERYONE IN THE EDITING DEPARTMENT,
THE DESIGNER FUJITA, HAREYAMA, EVERYONE AT
KADOKAWA SHOTEN, SOGA, NISHIKAWA, KITAMURA,
ISHIKAWA, SUNAHARA, KIDO, MIKKO, YUMIZURU,
THE MATOBA FAMILY, THE YAMAZAKI FAMILY,
AND THE NAKAMURA FAMILY

I'M SINCERELY GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU WHO READ HARUMA AND THE OTHERS' STORY TO THE VERY END.

SAMURAI DRIVE, ALL EIGHT VOLUMES. FUJIKO KOSUMI

THE PATH HE DROVE THROUGH WILL BECOME LEGEND.

SAMURAI DRIVES
Fujiko Kosumi

SAMURAI DRIVE
Volume 8

KADDKAWA MANGA

Story and Art by
Fujiko Kosumi

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